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MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

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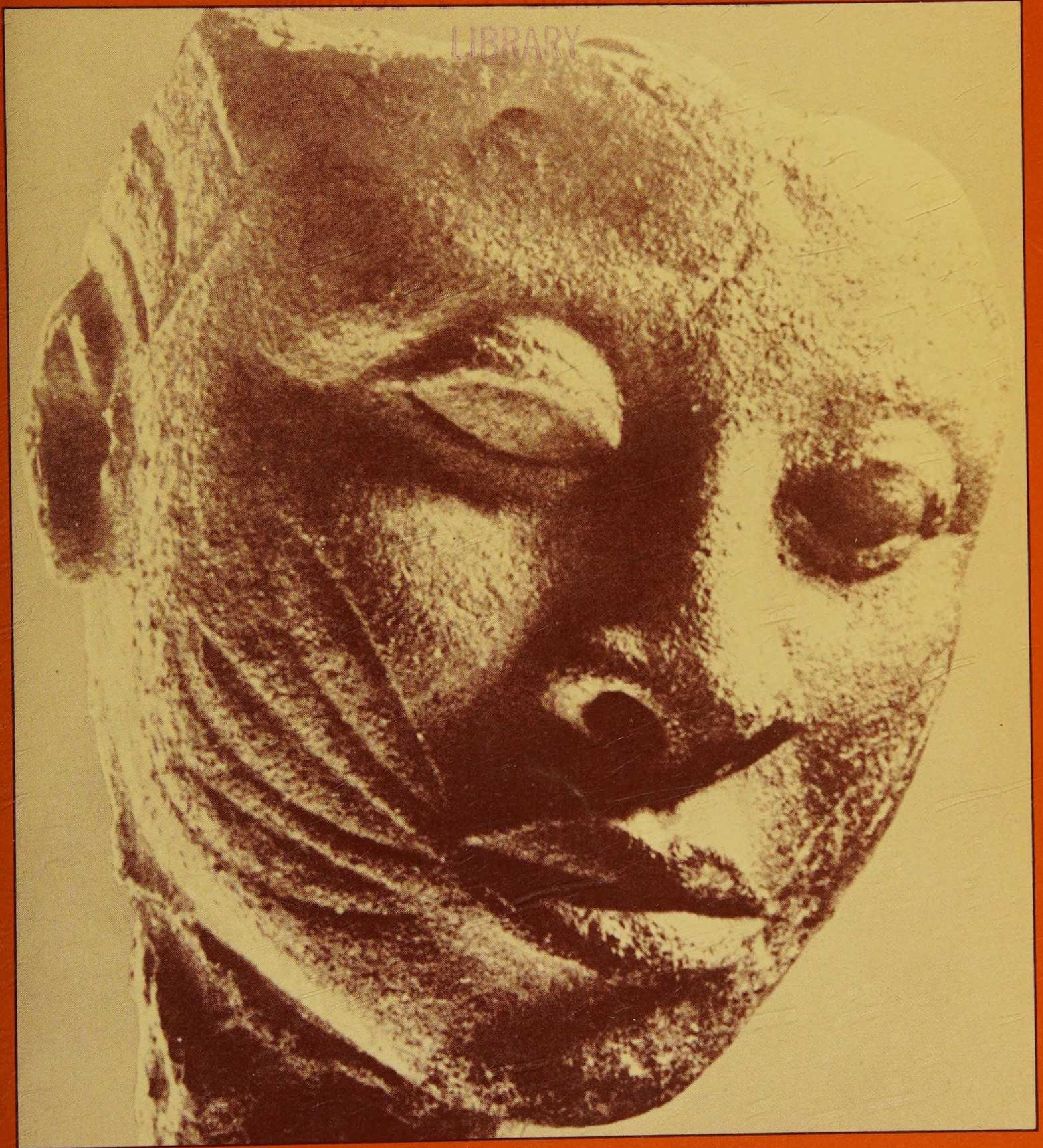

Woman

Ursula K. Le Guin on Mount St. Helens
Four Women by P.L. Travers
Joseph Campbell on the Great Goddess

VOLUME V, NO. 4

PARABOLA

WOMAN

MYTH AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

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Inside Cover: Portait of a Scindi girl. Copyright ©Stella Snead 1980.

FOCUS

We are experiencing the disturbance characteristic of a transitional time. The "revolution" we have been going through has destroyed many outworn and crippling assumptions about woman, but it has also brought terrible suffering and confusion. We are unable to live in the old roles, but the new way is still unknown. During the social upheaval of this century we have not been able to distinguish between what belongs to the essential nature of woman and what has been grafted on it artificially; and the results of this ambivalence have been as unbalancing for men as they have for women. We are speaking primarily of woman in this issue, but of course not to her alone. We are born male or female, but both manhood and womanhood need to be achieved; and in ways we do not fully understand, the possibilities of one are inextricably bound to the other. Their relationship is so intricate that any displacement must affect both.

In a woman's search for the fulfillment of her own nature, what can she trust except her own response to what rings true for her? It is with this faculty which reson-

ates to her own truth that she can begin to reclaim what is of positive value in her past. In refusing slavery, she needs not to lose sight of her joy in nurturing others. In asserting a growing independence, her need and gift for relationship must not be obscured. She must learn the difference between what she really is and what has been added to her image. And she has passed the point where an emotional reaction to a statement like "Biology is destiny" can be of any use in this process. Individuals must face for themselves to what degree, and in what way, this is or is not true for them. Helen Luke writes in this issue: "As long as we remain in our bodies here in space and time, we are predominantly either male or female.... A woman is born to be essentially and wholly a woman and the more deeply and consciously she is able to live the spirit, the Logos, within her the more surely she will realize this truth." Modern women are not given an understanding of their purpose and role in the way those in traditional cultures seem to have been given it. But they do not need to invent themselves. Yet in rejecting the labels others have put on them, they are in danger of falling into the trap of their own static definitions. The task of self-discovery is a continual process demanding the courage to make room for contradiction, to accept the many sides of one's nature that seem irreconcilable.

Perhaps this is the way that can lead women towards truly meaningful choice. It has been sufficiently proved in our society that they can do most of the things that used to be considered the prerogatives of the male. Now each individual must ask how what she chooses to do relates to her being as a woman. What will isolate and alienate her from her own nature and from others? What will help connect her to herself and support her search on all levels?

In his article on the Great Goddess, Joseph Campbell writes about a stone figure dating from approximately 6000 B.C. in which a woman is shown back to back with herself, on one side embracing a man, and on the other holding a child. From our earliest times woman has been seen as the transformer, mediator, maintainer, and sustainer. The world needs the expression of these potentials as much as woman's nature

needs to express them. At the same time, Campbell recognizes that women have embarked on a quest for self-realization for which there is no mythological model. We cannot live in the past, and how to go forward constitutes a critical challenge to both men and women, destined as they are forever to an inescapable need for each other.

There can be no single answer valid for all of us—it is unlikely that there ever was. This issue of PARABOLA does not attempt to provide one. We do hope that at least some of what follows may furnish material to provoke, stimulate, and delight that within us which is our own.

—Lorraine Kisly
Guest Editor

PARABOLA is interested in an exchange of ideas and points of view through the active participation of its readers. We welcome your letters and comments on the issues raised in our pages. Please address all correspondence to:

The Editor, PARABOLA, 150 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10011

We especially regret the omission of the mention of the book from which the photographic essay by Abraham Menashe in PARABOLA, Vol. V, No. 3 was taken. The book is Inner Grace *published in cloth and paperback by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1980, copyright ©1979, 1980 Abraham Menashe, reprinted with permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. It is a volume we enthusiastically recommend to our readers.*

—The Editors

I suspect that some close research could get your "Green Grow the Rushes-O" a more exact answer than the one you gave him in Vol. V, No. 2. All unscientifically, I contribute the following:

1. If the two identifiable motifs in the song are the Bible and the heavens, then rushes should suggest Moses. Jewish tradition believes that *lo yaqum kamosheh 'od* (there will never be another Moses), but this seems a most un-Jewish song. In the version I learned (in the Boy Scouts), we sang, or at least I did, "one is one and all alone and ever more shall be my home."

2. "Two, two the lily-white boys." How about Castor and Pollux? You have to be naked to be lily-white, besides being Caucasian; "Clothe them all in green-O" suggests nakedness too. My association is to the two lily-white carrara statues of Castor and Pollux on the Capitoline Hill in Rome.

3. "Three, three, the rivals." The three most famous rivals in history—that is, the most famous set of three—would arguably be Hera, Athena, and Aphrodite, competing for the golden apple of Paris. But what are such temptresses doing in a good biblical song, a Boy Scout song at that?

4. The Gospel Makers are the evangelists, of course.

5. I alone, I now realize, have been singing, "Five for the cymbals at your door." Give me a cymbal over a symbol any day.

6. Another Boy Scout variant, though again I wonder if I alone sang it, is "Six for the six brown walkers" in place of your "Six for the six proud walkers." Proud walking sounds like Bible for arrogance, so the six may be the sinful kings of Israel or such, but brown walkers retain my affection. I probably had in mind one of those Norman Rockwell posters with Boy Scouts of every race, all uniformed up for a hike, all somehow with New England expressions on their faces.

Your other identifications are either plainly correct or beyond my improving on. "April Rainers" was the name of a short-lived quartet some years ago. One etymology of "Gringo" is that it comes from "Green grow" in our song. Mexicans heard it from American soldiers during the Mexican-American War.

—Jack Miles
Malibu, CA

We recently asked readers who had not renewed their subscriptions to PARABOLA to tell us why. One of the more thought-provoking replies—which we deeply appreciate—follows:

The first issue I ever read of PARABOLA was Vol. I, No. 2—Spring 1976—containing Barbara Myerhoff's superlative article on the shaman. I believe I was sold on the magazine right then, although I did not

actually shell out for a subscription for another year or so. I saw no copies of the magazine other than that one until my subscription began, so perhaps I judged what you were trying to do too hastily. When I actually began receiving subscription copies, I read them with mounting disappointment, and by the time my subscription expired I had made up my mind not to renew...

At Harvard, I had the good fortune to read Victor Turner's *The Ritual Process* shortly after its publication. For all its flaws, that book had something to say—something that locked in with my mounting suspicions as an anthropologist, a writer, and a sometime member of the countercultural fringe. I was just beginning to realize, at that time, that the realms of experience we tag "mystical" or "spiritual" are not realms of self-induced or accidentally-induced delusion, but sane attentiveness to matters that we normally overlook; and that, furthermore, these realms are not the playthings of the idle poor, but are essential parts of the process of peacemaking, the process of adjusting to personal crisis, the creative process, the cognitive process, and the process of recovery from schizophrenia. I felt that Victor Turner, in that book, had given us a possible way to approach these realms of experience scientifically, with clarity and logic, neither denying that they exist nor distorting what they are, nor trying to subvert them to unhealthy purposes, but listening to them and learning from them and possibly coming out richer from the process. I hoped like hell that someone would follow up on Turner's lead.

So this is the shape of the excitement that flamed back up, six years later, when I read Dr. Myerhoff's article in your second issue. By golly, I thought, someone's actually doing it.

Some of the other issues of PARABOLA I've seen since then lived up to my early hopes. Vol. I, No. 4, and Vol. II, No. 1, in my opinion, are excellent work, deserving of high praise. But as your third year of publication gave way to your fourth, it seemed to me that you'd settled on a different sort of track. Your emphasis was not on the spirit, but on the art, not on the experience, but on the given legend. ("The letter killeth," dammit...) The original sincerity of approach, which I liked, had given way to the preening of an in-group—proud to be the big names in their field; proud, each of them, that they know all the others more or less personally; immensely impressed by their own ability to quote all the sources. The search for functional understanding, the desire to know the experience, the willingness to admit that one *does not know* what's going on, were nowhere visible. Instead I saw the erudite babble of that type of cultured, self-appointed expert who is forever being idolized by dabblers in his/her field. When I think of what your magazine *could* have accomplished, *that* breaks my heart.

I live a busy life. If your magazine can't provide what I need, I honestly don't have time for it.

But I do wish you the best of luck.

—Marshall Massey
Denver, CO

We hope that through questioning and experimentation we are growing. We invite all our readers to offer their evaluation of the magazine. We need your response, and we hope a lively dialogue will ensue.

— The Editors

Four Women
by P.L. Travers

Among the Phaeacians *Maiden*

So, kirtling up their robes, the young girls trod the clothes in the stream, and spread them out on the shore of the sea, playing at ball till the sun should dry them.

But when the ball, flung too far, was lost into the eddying current, they set up such a treble clamor that the sleeping man awoke.

And again they cried and chastely fled as he came and stood before them naked, holding the decorous bough as a shield, the gold of head and chest and loins silvered by salt from the sea.

Only one, the King's daughter, stood her ground, sensing the lordliness of his essence and finding him comely withal.

It was she who clothed him in new-washed raiment, telling him in whose meadows he stood, bidding him follow in the wake of her wagon as far as her father's palace.

It was she, standing behind a pillar, who watched him assume, as custom required, the supplicant's place among the ashes; saw him beckoned to a higher place by her father; and, for a moment, caught his glance as he passed to his bed beneath the rafters.

For the length of his sojourn on the island, I think it would have been always thus: she, virgin and circumspect, watching at the rim of events for his moving shape among them; he, a man well-known to woman and, in his own way, circumspect, Argus-eyed for a glimpse of her amid the congregation.

When, jeered at by the younger men—"Are you not merchant rather than gamesman?"—he hurled the stone so far afield that the earth rushed away beneath it, it was to her, anonymous in the crowd of women, that he raised his hand in salute; from her when the minstrel sang of the Wooden Horse, the siege of Troy and its grievous outcome, that he hid his tears in his sleeve; for her that—when asked for news of Odysseus—he acknowledged his name.

Thereafter, from some hidden vantage point, she would have listened to his story, the litany of a man's adventures on the way to his meridian—Calypso, Circe, the Lotus Eaters, Cyclops, Aeolus, the Laestrygons, the descent into Hades, the song of the Sirens, the thrust between Scylla and Charybdis, the cattle of the Sun slaughtered.

And at last when, with the feasting over, libations poured and gifts given, the princes gathered upon the sea-banks to escort him to his hollow ship, she would have taken her place among them and he, as surely, have sought her there.

This was farewell. And with farewell one can speak one's heart, and freely, since it is but once.

"Sir, when you come to your wife and heartland, bethink thee of me upon a moment, for that to me first thou owest the ransom of life."

"I will remember thee all my days and pray to the gods to requite thee."

One can pack a lifetime into a sentence.

"We should leave life," said Nietszche, "as Odysseus left Nausicaa, not enamored, but blessing."

Ah, if we could! And even go further—love it and leave it and also bless. For were they not enamored? Literature, to say nothing of life, is full of such affinities—the noon-day man and the morning girl, signaling each to other as they go their separate ways. But Homer, though never chary of words, left a later poet to say it.

"She loved him for the dangers he had passed
And he loved her that she did pity them."

And is it not most probable that she, sandal-footed upon the strand, and he in the stern of the well-found ship, would stand and keep their mutual vigil, eye unto eye as the distance lengthened, till ship and island both disappeared—one to the East, one to the West, down the curve of the rounded sea?

For she was the last glimpse of his heyday and he her first glimpse of hers.

By the River Eurotus *Paramour*

"Mother, may I go out to swim?
Yes, my darling daughter!
Hang your clothes on the mulberry bush
But don't go near the water."

So, having swum—you don't do all that your mother tells you—the girl lay naked beside the water, lazily eating ripe mulberries, thinking and hardly thinking the thoughts that run in the blood.

It has been said that when on earth great beauty goes exempt from danger, it will be endangered by a source on High. She was alone. There was nobody in sight. How could she know, untaught by her beauty, that she had been seen and noted?

But suddenly she was aware of stillness—no stir of wind, no leaf bending, no lapping of the tide. All time was gathered into a second, the universe holding its breath.

And in herself, too, there was stillness, as of a pitcher filled to the brim, sufficient with the sufficiency that waits to be poured out.

Then, as if from nowhere, there he was, white and majestic upon the waters that lifted him forward, himself not moving.

A maiden impudence rose within her. Who did he think he was, then, lording it in her father's demesne, moor hens dipping, rushes bowing as he passed on his processional way, motionless as a painted swan upon a painted river?

She stepped into the stream to accost him, mulberry in her outstretched palm.

"Goosey," she mocked him. "Goosey Gander?" For what was he doing in a lady's chamber?

In the round black unblinking eye a light quickened and flashed. He became a moving hieroglyph, a great white arc from tail to beak that seized the fruit—and her.

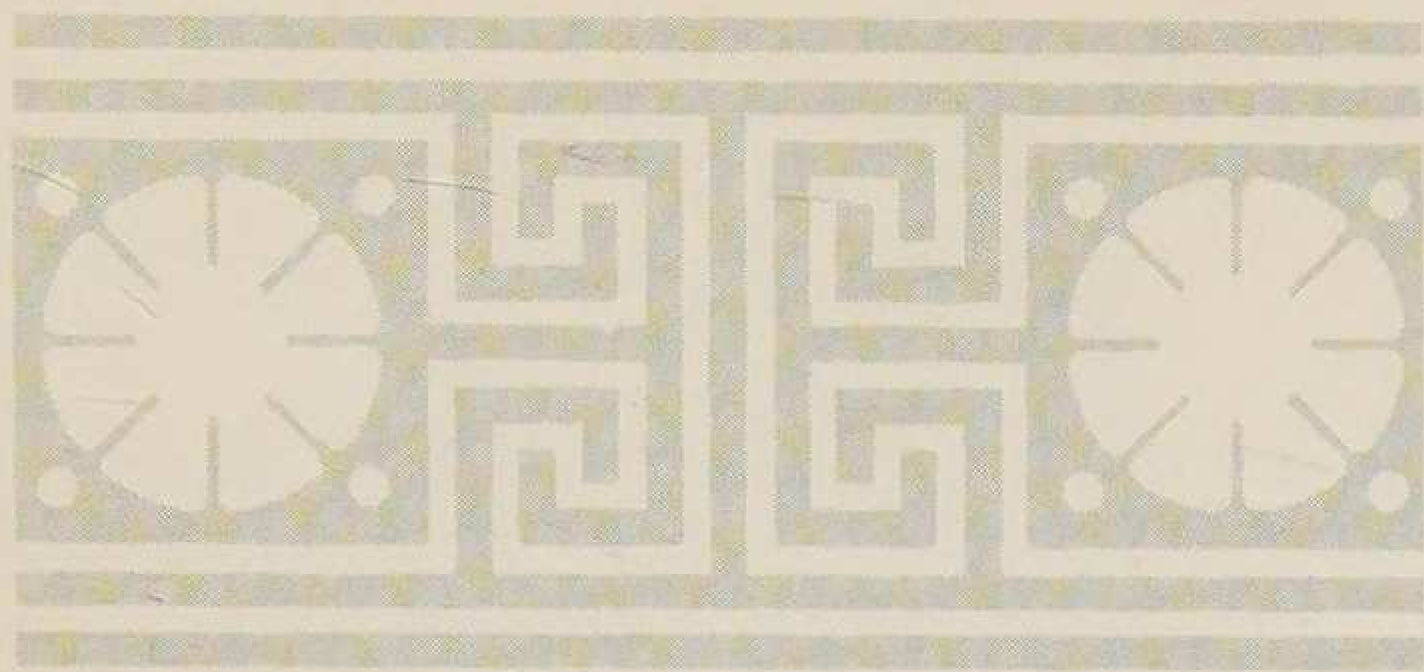
So, in a cumulus of feather, clipped by the steel of pinion and breastbone, she was fathomed from the height to the depth, lifted and whirled through world upon world, the still pitcher spilled and refilled before the indifferent beak would let her drop and turn to pluck at the sedge.

"Of the tales that daughters/ Tell their poor old mothers/Which by all accounts are/Often very odd;/Leda's was a story/ Stranger than all others—/What was there to say but/Glory be to God?"

Even so, her mother said more.

"A dark eye with a light in the center? Musha, my girl, that was no bird, no bird at all for all the feather. Why would you not be harkening to me, with Tyndareus, the fine boy-o—a steady, decent mortal lad—already with his foot in the door and a wedding ring in his hand? Ochone, Ochone, what will come of it?"

Well, what came of it, at the ninth month midnight, was two hyacinthine eggs, Troy fallen, Agamemnon murdered, Helen



magicked away to Egypt, horseboys turned into stars!

The tale has been told since Word was spoken and never once has it warned one soul to look before he leaps—if, indeed, the looking could serve a purpose! What is in it, is in it. What will be, will be. Shed no tear for milk that is spilt. Cause is seldom a match for effect.

A morning dip, a forbidden peep at a sleeping lover, a little finger pricked by a spindle—who knows how anything will end?

In the Underworld *Wife*

Speak, Poet, of him who with his lute made trees/and the mountain tops that freeze/ Bow their heads when he did sing!

But of me, his constant muse, you will be silent. Dead wives tell no tales. Give them no obituaries, Sir, lest haply their immaculate hero be shown as fallible man.

Oh, yes. When the innocent serpent struck, he clamored of love at the gates of Heaven. "Gods, restore my bride, I pray you! Let me go down to Hell to fetch her!" Give him his due. He did what he could.

So, with sanction and proviso, he came, singing and strumming to the rescue. But he was all sound and here was silence. He was all light and here was the dark. In the chthonic corridors there is neither taper nor echo.

Could you not trust yourself, Orpheus, or, if not yourself, the me in you, and know my footfall to be your heartbeat, a mute and mutual tattoo played to restore us to the sun? Did your blood not tell you that I would follow?

It did. But you dared not believe it. Disregarding that dread proviso, you faltered and turned your head!

Well, go your ways, my second serpent. Sing, wallowing in the world's pity—alas, to have twice lost a bride to Hades! But of what that lost bride has lost, the world will take no note.

Sing, for, indeed, you cannot help it. The gods are tricksters, their beneficence equivocal. The gift of song is but half a gift if the singer cannot refrain from singing. And even when that turned head is severed —O Maenads, avenge Eurydice!—it still will babble upon the waters, its oracles envied by Apollo, honored in earth and sky.

O head, if I lived, I would gather you to me, rock you upon my faithful arm, silence with mine your bleating mouth.

But the dead have no compassion. They lack the heart and bowels for it. What is love? 'Tis not hereafter. Anger alone crosses all borders and forever vibrates in the lifeless shades.

So, my curse on you and your lute!

On a Swiss Mountain *Mother*

At the highest point the cross stands, thickset, rough-hewn, still almost forest. Its broad vertical, solid and warm, mediates the sun to my back. Above me its freight hangs from the crosstrees, sensed rather than seen. For I dare not look up. The sky is too deep. I would drown in the bottomless blue. But the burden is known by the shadow it throws, the curve of a bent leg against the straight and the patch of sunlight between.

Ah, shadows! They tell us more than it ever can, the substantial thing that throws them. The intangible shape upon the grass, that at any moment a cloud may rub out,

opens towards me maternal arms. Welcome, my everlasting child! For the first time I understand that the cross is life as well as death, a wide world-mothering symbol. Oh, my head knew it, but head-knowing is hardly knowing. The body must make it its own.

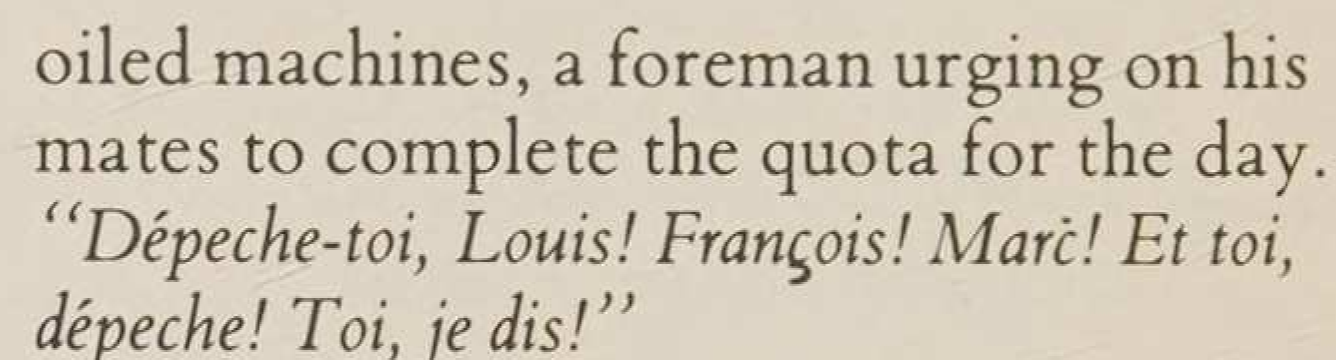
I glance across valleys to the other mountains. In every high alpine meadow stands another homely mother-rood, holding its son to its breast. And I think of those who set up the trees and carved the suspended figures. Old men they would inevitably be, seasoned by all the living and dying that the young have yet to do—Andreas, Rudi or Beat, ankle-deep among the shavings, hands apt to chisel and awl, cutting, curving, smoothing, sanding, evoking from mindless wood a man. Whoever you are, alive or dead, that shaped the unseen one above me, be blessed, old carpenter!

On my last day, however—for who knows if I will come again?—I confront my vertigo and look up. A dizzying glimpse of head and crown and then I must cravenly look away. But, at least, eyes closed, I can reach up a hand to the sun-warmed wooden foot.

It is cold. My fingers discern a blistered smoothness—cracks and wens and pimples of paint over something harder than wood. It is iron! He has not been carved, but poured from a mold; not a man-made man, a machine-made thing, supported on a block, also molded, that bears the corporative name, *Larrieux et Cie.*

Where can it be, near or far, the workshop that pours forth a spate of Christs? A lucrative proceeding, surely. There are many mountains in the world and each needs its mute Reminder.

I imagine a moving assembly belt, bearing along the recumbent figures and, as they pass, artisans affixing to them the details of nail and crown. The scene is cheerful—talking and laughter, the humming of well-



oiled machines, a foreman urging on his mates to complete the quota for the day. *"Dépeche-toi, Louis! François! Marc! Et toi, dépeche! Toi, je dis!"*

My God, he is looking at *me*! And why not? Am I not liberated? Lifted up to the equality with any Marc or Louis? I, who had thought it my part to bear him, heavy and lively in my shoaling net; and, later, after thirty-three years, heavy and lifeless across my knees—am at liberty, required even, to give him the nail and the thorn.

Stabat Mater seeking the child in the temple, Stabat Mater when water is turned into wine, Stabat Mater amid the palms and shouting, Stabat Mater in the field of Golgotha—I now have the right to forswear all this. Sisters, you have set me free!

He comes towards me, acquiescent, one hole—sound economy!—gouged through the two crossed feet. I seize the bolt and ram it home. The five o'clock whistle blows and the moving line comes to a halt.

"Alors, mes amis, c'est terminé. Let us have a *fine* at the corner bistro. What shall it be? Hyssop and gall? A sponge dipped in vinegar? Wormwood? *Santé, tout le monde. A demain!"*

A demain? No. There is no tomorrow. Rather, *à Dieu. Ite missa est.*

Farewell, Andreas, Rudi, Beat! You were once, but you are no more.

So, to you, *Larrieux et Cie*, for doing what nobody else would do, for doing what had to be done—*merci!*

And to you, Necessity, that it had to be done at all—mercy! ◇

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The Perennial Feminine

by Helen M. Luke

One can scarcely open a magazine nowadays—let alone read any of the innumerable brochures announcing lectures, seminars, group therapy, or conferences on psychological matters—without being struck by the preponderance of the theme of the "new woman." When this degree of interest arises we may be sure that it springs from an overwhelming need for a new attitude. As always in the modern world, there is danger that, in the very urgency of that need, the tender new growth of consciousness may be swamped, in many, by the spate of theories and opinions poured out upon us.

The safeguard for the individual woman lies in her ability to connect the theories expounded and the emotions aroused in her with her symbolic life; for only when this connection is made do the changes in her actual life become real. Without it, however things may appear on the surface, the theoretical changes merely create a deeper and more destructive conflict in her soul.

Where, however, is a woman to look for nourishment for her inner imagery as her new personality struggles for birth? The changes in the way of Eve have come with staggering swiftness in the last one hundred years, but it seems to me that only recently has the realization broken through that a deeper awareness of the nature of these changes is now essential. If we are to stop the wreckage caused by the disorientation of women, by their loss of identity under the stresses of the new way, then the numinous meaning of the great challenge they face must break through from the unconscious; for no amount of rational analysis can bring healing. Only so can the images of the masculine and feminine, which have become more and more dangerously mixed in this century be discriminated once more, so that they may come to a new synthesis in both woman and man.

It is important that we attempt to arrive at some degree of clarity about various attitudes and assumptions which are currently prevalent when people talk about woman. Those who assert that the only difference between men and women is biological, and that in every other way they are equal and have the same inborn potentialities, have disastrously missed the point. Equality of value between individuals is an eternal truth, beyond all comparisons, whereas "superior" and "inferior" are relative terms defining abilities or degrees of consciousness. Equality of opportunity for

women has indeed to be fought for, but equality of value can never be understood until we have learned to discriminate and accept *difference*. The biological difference between man and woman is never a "nothing but"; it is a fundamental difference, and it does not stop with the body but implies an equally fundamental difference of *psychic* nature. No matter how consciously we may develop the contrasexual principle within us, no matter how strong our intuition of the ultimate union between the masculine and feminine elements in each individual, yet as long as we remain in our bodies here in space and time, we are predominantly either male or female, and we forget this at our peril. Disaster awaits a woman who imitates man, but even a woman who aims at becoming half man, half woman, and imagines she is thereby achieving archetypal "androgyny" will certainly be inferior on both counts. A woman is born to be essentially and wholly a woman and the more deeply and consciously she is able to know and live the spirit, the Logos, within her, the more surely she will realize this truth. One of the most frightening characteristics of our present *Zeitgeist* is the urge to destroy difference, to reduce everything to a horrible sameness in the cause of "equality."

Whether a woman is efficient or brilliant in spheres hitherto deemed masculine, or whether she remains in a traditionally feminine role, modern woman must discriminate and relate to the image of the spirit, while at the same time maintaining her roots in her basic feminine nature—that which receives, nourishes, and gives birth on all levels of being through her awareness of the earth and her ability to bring up the water of life from under the earth. All her true creativeness springs from this.

As we look back on the extremely rapid emergence of women in this century into the masculine world of thought and action, it is not surprising that she has fallen into increased contempt for her own values. It has surely been a necessary phase, but its effects have been devastating not only on woman herself but also on the men around her. For the animus—the unconscious masculinity in a woman—when he has taken possession of her femininity, has a terrifying power, charged as he is with the numinosity of the unconscious—and most men in their turn, when faced with this power in their women, either retreat into an inferior passive femininity, seeking to propitiate the animus power, or else react with brutal aggressive masculinity. Small wonder that women thus possessed, having lost their true roots in nature, are constantly beset by the anxious feeling of being useless, however outwardly successful. The dreams of modern women are full of this basic insecurity.

It is time then for woman to turn from this hidden contempt for the feminine values so that she may cease to identify creativity solely with the productions of thought and with achievements in the outer world. It is exceedingly hard for us to realize, in the climate of Western society, that the woman who quietly *responds* with intense interest and love to people, to ideas, and to things, is as deeply and truly creative as one who always seeks to lead, to act, to achieve. The feminine qualities of receptivity, of nurturing in silence and secrecy are (whether in man or woman) as essential to creation as their masculine opposites and in no way inferior.

But these are all rational thoughts *about* the situation. What of the images without which, as I said at the outset, no change is possible? How is a woman, when she feels the immense fascination of the power of the spirit stirring in her, to welcome it and yet remain true to her womanhood, or how is she to rediscover her femininity if she has lost it? How is a man to realize the values of the heart without losing the bright sword of his spirit in the fogs of emotion? There are no intellectual answers. Only the images by which we live can bring transformation. The future hangs on this quest for the heart of love by both sexes.

Each of us has a well of images within, which are the saving reality, and whence may be born the individual myth carrying

the meaning of a life. That new images are now emerging in the tales and poetry of our time is now beyond doubt. But any truly valid "new myth" cannot be rationally invented. It must be born out of the crucible of our own struggles and suffering as we affirm our new freedom without rejecting the perennial truth of the feminine way.

There is one story written in this century that speaks with particular power to the predicament of women in our time. C.S. Lewis, towards the end of his life, wrote *Till We Have Faces*—a story based on the myth of Psyche and Eros and told from the point of view of one of the ugly sisters. I have written elsewhere a detailed commentary* on this beautiful tale of a woman's quest for her lost femininity, and I mention it here because it is an example of how an old myth grows into contemporary relevance through the imagination of an individual expressing the unconscious need of his or her time.

However, the still more ancient myth of Demeter and Kore is a seedbed of feminine experience for women of all times and places, and I shall now try to explore some of its unchanging wisdom.

The story, taken from the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, is as follows.

Demeter's lovely daugher, Persephone, was playing with her companions in the meadows and, wandering off by herself, she saw a flower, a narcissus with one hundred blossoms, which Zeus himself with help of Gaia, goddess of Earth, had caused to grow as a snare for her. Fascinated by this flower, with its intoxicating scent, she reached to pick it. At that moment the earth opened, and the Lord of the Dead himself appeared from the depths with his immortal horses and, seizing her in spite of her cries, carried her off to the underworld, unseen and unheard by any except the goddess Hecate who, as she was thinking "delicate thoughts," heard the cry from her cave. Otherwise only Helios the Sun himself witnessed the act. Persephone cried out to Zeus to save her, but he took no notice at all, for he himself had planned the whole thing.

The mountains and the depths of the sea, however, carried the sound of her voice, and "her lady mother heard her." For nine days the sorrowing mother, the great goddess Demeter, wandered over the earth carrying burning torches and stopping neither to eat nor to wash, but no one anywhere could give her news of her lost daughter.

But on the tenth day came the goddess Hecate, bearing a torch, and told the seeking mother that her daughter had been ravished away, but that she had heard only and not seen who the ravisher might be. Then together the two goddesses went to Helios, the Sun, as he drove his chariot across the heavens, and Demeter entreated him to tell her what he had seen. He answered that Zeus himself had given Kore to his brother Hades for his wife, and he urged her to cease lamenting as this was a good marriage for her daughter.

* *Way of Woman, Ancient and Modern,* Helen M. Luke, obtainable from Apple Farm, 12291 Hoffman Rd., Three Rivers, MI 49093, $2.50.

But her grief only increased the more and she wandered unknown, and disfigured by sorrow, among the cities of men, until she came one day to Eleusis and there she sat by the wayside beside the Maiden's Well where the women came to draw water. She bore the form of an old woman past child-bearing, and she sat in the shade of an olive tree. Then came the four daughters of the King of Eleusis to draw water, and when they saw her, they questioned her, and she told them that she was far from her home in Crete and sought for work—to nurse a child perhaps. Then the princesses led her to their father and mother, for they needed a nurse for a late-born son. With her dark robe and her head veiled she came into the house of the king, and her great height and the light which came from her struck awe into them all. At first she sat sad and speechless, but the ribald jokes of an old woman cheered her. When they offered her wine, she refused it saying she was not permitted to drink it and asking for meal and water mixed. Then she took the child from his mother and held him "on her fragrant heart," and he grew daily stronger and more beautiful on food that was more than mortal. Each night she took the child and laid him in the fire like a brand while his parents slept. But one night the child's mother came in the night and saw what was being done to her child and cried out in terror and anger and snatched him from the goddess, thus depriving him of immortality. The goddess revealed her identity, upbraiding the mother for her "witlessness" in destroying the child's chance of immortality, and she ordered that a great temple be built for her there in Eleusis. When this was done she sat within the temple and mourned for her daughter.

Now she brought a terrible year on mankind, for she withheld growth from the earth, and no seed came up, and all the fruits of the earth were withering, so that mankind would surely have perished, and

the gods would have been left without worshipers. So now Zeus in his heaven sent Iris to Demeter and begged and implored her to return among the gods and restore fertility to the earth, but she was deaf to all his pleading, even when each and all of the gods had come one by one to persuade her. And then at last Zeus sent Hermes to his brother Hades to tell him he must release Kore to her mother Demeter so that she might no longer withhold the seed from the earth.

Hades then turned to the still grieving Persephone and said that she might go, but offered her a pomegranate seed to eat as they parted. And she, though she had eaten nothing in the underworld, now, in her joy, took it and ate it, thus ensuring that she must return. Only if she had not eaten could she stay always with her mother. Henceforth she must return always to the underworld for one-third of the year. Then as they rejoiced in each other Hecate came again and kissed Kore many times and from that day was her "queenly comrade." And then Spring burst forth on the earth, but for one-third of each year the trees were bare and the land lay fallow. And as Demeter caused the grain to grow rich and fat again, she taught the meaning of it to all the rulers

in Eleusis and gave instructions as to her rites, and the mysteries which should be celebrated there.

In his essay on the Kore (the primordial maiden) Jung has said, "Demeter and Kore, mother and daughter, extend the feminine consciousness upwards and downwards—and widen out the narrowly conscious mind bound in space and time, giving it intimations of a greater and more comprehensive personality which has a share in the eternal course of things...It seems clear enough that the man's anima found projection in the Demeter cult... For a man, anima experiences are of immense and abiding significance. But the Demeter-Kore myth is far too feminine to have been merely the result of an anima projection...Demeter-Kore exists on the plane of mother-daughter experience which is alien to man and shuts him out."

There is an immense difference between the mother-son and the mother-daughter experience. On the archetypal level the son carries for the mother the image of her inner quest, but the daughter is the extension of her very self, carrying her back into the past and her own youth and forward to the promise of her own rebirth into a new personality, into the awareness of the Self. In the natural pattern of development the boy will feel his separateness from his mother by reason of his masculinity much sooner than the girl and will begin his striving for achievement. Everywhere, however, before the twentieth century, the growing girl remained at home contained in the orbit of her mother until the time came for her to become a mother herself and so reverse her role. Thus she would grow naturally from the passive state of being protected into the vital passivity of opening herself to receive the seed, the transition point being marked actually or symbolically by the violent breaking of her virginity.

Margaret Mead has written, "If women are to be restless and questing even in face of child-bearing they must be made so through education." For better, for worse, she has been made so. It can lead a woman either to disaster or to her great opportunity, and if she is to succeed in bridging the gap it is vital that, in one way or another, she pass through the Demeter-Kore experience in her inner life.

In ancient Greece the Eleusinian mysteries of Demeter bear witness to this overwhelming need of woman in her already growing separation from the natural pattern of the primitive feminine—the need for the Goddess to teach her the *meaning* of the deep transformation of her being from daughter to mother to daughter again. How much greater is that need today, when so often the woman lives almost like a man in the outer world and must find the whole meaning of her motherhood inwardly instead of physically, and when so many of those who do bear children are simply playing at "mothers and babies," never having allowed themselves to experience consciously the violent end of their daughter identification. There is strong evidence that the man initiated into the mysteries also "became" the *Goddess*, not the *God*. He too, in the flowering of Athenian civilization and the growing split between the conscious and unconscious, and between reason and the ancient goddesses of the earth and moon, must go through a profound anima experience and rediscover the meaning of the feminine within, must free his infantile anima from possession by the mother, and then find her again as mature and objective feeling, mother and maiden in one.

Persephone is playing with her companions in the eternal Spring, completely contained in her carefree belief that nothing can change this happy state of youth and beauty. Underneath, however, the urge to consciousness is stirring, and "the maiden not to be named," strays away from her fellows, and, intoxicated by the scent of a narcissus, she stoops to pick it and in so doing opens the door through which the Lord of the Underworld rushes up to seize her. We may notice here that Gaia, mother earth, is clearly distinguished from Deme-

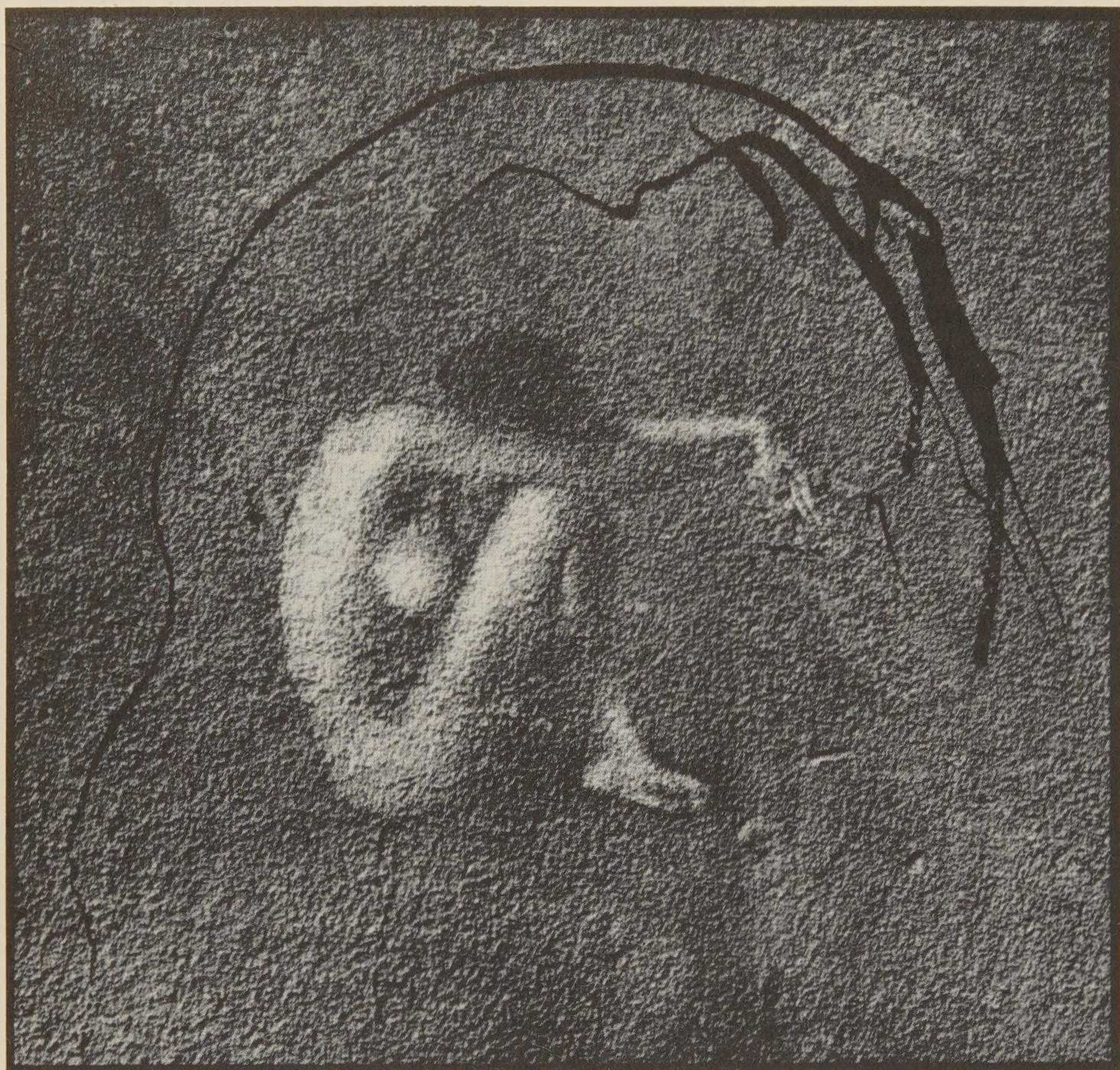
ter in this myth. She is Zeus's fellow conspirator as it were! Kerenyi says, "From the Earth Mother's point of view, neither seduction nor death is the least bit tragic or even dramatic."

It is through the father that the daughter first becomes conscious of her self. When there is no adequate father-image in a girl's life, the identity of daughter and mother can assume a tremendous intensity, or else when the father-image is very negative and frightening, the daughter may unconsciously take on the mother's problem in a peculiarly deep way, sometimes carrying it all her life, long after the mother's death, and so remaining crippled in her effort to face her own fate in freedom. Normally the girl begins to detach from the mother, and to become conscious of her own potential motherhood through love of the father. Thus she is ready for the intoxicating moment of finding the narcissus—seeing *herself* as a person (as Narcissus saw his own face in the water), and the inevitable rape will follow. Dionysos was admiring himself in a mirror when he was set upon by the Titans and torn to pieces, the dismemberment which led to his rebirth. He is a male counterpart of Persephone.

The moment of breakthrough for a woman is always symbolically a rape—a necessity—something which takes hold with overmastering power and brooks no resistance. The arranged marriages of the primitive were often accompanied by a ritual stealing of the woman. The carrying of the woman over the threshold has survived through the centuries, becoming finally a joke, its connection with myth being lost. Any breakthrough of new consciousness, though it may have been maturing for months or years out of sight, comes through a building up of tension which reaches a breaking point. If the man or woman stands firm with courage, the breakdown becomes a breakthrough into a surge of new life. If he cannot stand it and settles for an evasion, then he will regress into neurosis.

The Lord of the Underworld is he who arises, bursts forth from the unconscious with all the tremendous power of instinct. He comes "with his immortal horses" and sweeps the maiden (the anima in a man) from the surface life of her childish paradise into the depths, into the kingdom of the dead—for a woman's total giving of her heart, of herself, in her experience of her instincts is a kind of death. This statement in no way equates this total giving with the outward experience of intercourse with a man. This is a normal part of it and by far the easiest way, but the instincts may be experienced to the full, sometimes perhaps even more profoundly, by a woman whose fate does not bring her the fruition of intercourse on the physical plane. An immature man may experience his instincts in a compartment, so to speak, without deep-seated damage—but not so a woman. If she does so she pays a very great price. It was not merely a man-made piece of injustice that condemned a woman's adultery as so much more shameful than a man's. The horrible cruelty of conventional prejudices should not blind us to the archetypal truths from which these distorted collective judgments spring. The woman who gives herself on the instinctual level without the love of her heart betrays the very essence of her being as woman. A prostitute, so called, whose warmth of *heart* flows out to the man in her every encounter is a far more moral person than the respectable wife who fulfils her "duty" with hidden hatred in her heart.

Persephone cries out in fear and protest as the cord of her tie to her mother, to her unconscious youthfulness, is violently cut, and nearby, Hecate, the goddess of the moon, hears her in her dark cave, though she does not see the abduction. There are three goddesses in the myth, Demeter, Persephone, and Hecate, and they are three aspects of woman. Hecate is the goddess of the dark moon, of the mediumistic intuition in woman of that which *hears* in the dark but does not see or understand. In this myth she appears as beneficent, linked positively to the others, but she has also of course her negative side. Disconnected from the other



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aspects of woman or from a man's undeveloped feeling she is the goddess of ghosts and witches and of the spells with which the unconscious binds us, or those near to us, from below. Mother earth and the sea, the mother of all, also carry the sound of the daughter's voice, and Demeter, the mother, hears and knows that the daughter is lost but not how. For nine days she wanders over the earth in fear and sorrow, searching for her daughter but not *understanding*. She is wholly identified with her grief, swallowed by it, even her body forgotten so that she does not eat or wash. It is the beginning of the unspeakably painful struggle of a woman to separate from her possessive emotions, the struggle which alone can give birth to love. As Demeter sank into her grief, so every time we are shocked out of some happy identification with another, which we have fondly imagined to be an unbreakable state, we are beset by the temptation to this surrender, to this despairing search for that which has been lost, demanding that it be restored to us exactly as it was, without any effort to discover the meaning of the experience. If we imagine we have succeeded in restoring the status quo, then the whole story will begin again and repeat itself endlessly and pointlessly until we can follow the goddess to the next step—the dawning of her attempt to *under-*

stand. This cut, this loss, must be experienced by every woman both as daughter and as mother or, especially in later years, as *both* at the same time, for in every relationship between two women the mother and the daughter archetypes are constellated; each may mother the other, each may depend on the other and ask to be mothered—the balance weighted now one way, now the other.

At this point we will look at the specific experience of the loss of the daughter in older women. It is the loss of the young and carefree part of oneself, the opportunity for the discoveries of meaning which are the task of the second half of life: it is the change from the life of outer projection to the detachment, the turning inward, which leads to the "immediate experience of being outside time" in Jung's words. In the language of this myth Death rises up and takes away the woman's belief in everlasting spring. The great majority of women today, having no contact at all with the Demeter mystery, have extreme difficulty in giving up this unconscious clinging to youth, their partial identification with man's anima image, the unraped Persephone eternally picking flowers in blissful unconsciousness of the dark world below her. To such women the menopause brings long-drawn out disturbances of the body and the psyche as the conflict grows more acute and remains unresolved.

Kerenyi has written, "To enter into the figure of Demeter means to be pursued, to be robbed, to be raped" (as Persephone), "to rage and grieve, to fail to understand" (as Demeter), "and then to get everything back and be born again" (as Demeter and Persephone—the twofold single reality of Demeter-Kore). There can be no short cuts in this experience. All through her nine-day search (the symbolic nine of pregnancy) in her unconscious abandonment to grief the goddess had nevertheless carried burning torches in her hand, symbol perhaps of that small fire of attention which must be kept burning through the darkness of our journey when all meaning seems to have left us. On the tenth day Hecate, the hitherto dormant intuition came, also bearing a torch, and tells Demeter that her daughter had been ravished away, though she does not know who the ravisher may be. Demeter's moon nature brings the first rift in the isolation her absorbing personal grief has created. The stricken mother begins to intuit, to hear for the first time a voice which leads her to reflect upon that which has brought about her loss. She emerges enough from her self-concern to seek the aid of conscious reason. Together the two goddesses approach and question Helios, the sun, and he tells Demeter what has happened—that Zeus himself has arranged this marriage for her daughter and that this should be accepted as a good, a happy fate. But although her conscious mind has seen and understood, she cannot accept this reasonable answer. "She fails to understand" with her essential being and continues "to rage and to grieve."

Strangely enough, a woman is certainly right to reject this all too easy rational solution. "Let us be sensible," we say. "Our loss is good for us." Our grief was nothing but a childish reaction, and so on. Nevertheless the sun's calm reasoning has affected us. We must go on living. We must emerge from this totally self-centered, self-pitying, sorrow and be awake to other people. We must work, we must relate, but we must not deny our grief. And so Demeter comes to the well of the maidens at Eleusis—the place where the woman consciously draws the water up from the depths—listens to the wisdom of the unconscious. There sitting under an olive tree she meets the king's daughters and offers to work as nurse to a child or at any menial task. No longer obsessed with *her* child, she can look again on the beautiful daughters of others and respond.

She goes to the palace. Arrived there she takes a lowly seat and her royal hosts offer her a cup of wine. But this she refuses and asks for a mixed drink of meal and water. It is not time yet for the wine of new life, the wine of full communion. We may remember here the words of Christ before his Passion. "I will not drink henceforth of

the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom." There is a time when all seeking of release from tension must be refused, and the drink must be plain and tasteless.

The goddess remains deeply sad in her bearing and there follows the delightful image of the first smile appearing on her face as she listens to the crude jokes of Iamba, the serving woman. Her load is not lightened by some lofty thought, but by a most earthy kind of humor. The ancients were not cursed with the puritanical split between earth and the holy.

This then is the next step, after a loss, after any emotional blow, even after a seemingly trivial incident involving hurt feelings. We must return to the well of feminine wisdom. We can always work and we can always serve and we can recover our sense of humor, if we will descend far enough from our goddess-like superiority. Demeter here appears as a woman past child-bearing—she has lost her own child, she can never bear another in the flesh. Even the partial acceptance of this means that she can now give of her wisdom to the children of others. Demeter, being a goddess, has the power to bestow immortality, and she feeds the child of the King and Queen with inner wisdom, and at night she thrusts him like a brand into the fire which burns but does not consume.

What is the meaning of this incident for us? It can perhaps be seen from two opposite angles. The fear and the protest of the human mother is on the one hand a warning of how fatal to a child's inner life is the overprotective possessiveness of mother love which tries to prevent all suffering and danger from touching the beloved son. But from another angle, on another level, the human mother's instinct is surely right. This is a human baby and must grow up into a human being, subject to death. If he is to reach immortality, he must reach it on the hard road of human experience and the battle for consciousness—not be given immunity and deprived of the suffering and dignity of manhood by a goddess. She is right, as a mother's instinct so often is, even if for the wrong reasons. It may be noted that the goddess here descends to something like a temper tantrum, throwing the child heartlessly onto the floor and reviling the mother for her witlessness and for her lack of vision.

It could be that the goddess' behavior at this point gives us a glimpse into another danger of the way. After a violent awakening to loss, inner or outer, when already we have been greatly matured by this, and when we have, perhaps with great courage, decided to do our best to serve and to work, it is often a great temptation to seek assuagement for our anger and grief in the satisfaction of passing on to others who are still in a very unconscious state our hard-won wisdom, and then to get very angry when this priceless gift is refused.

In a woman, it would not be so much a matter of preaching ideas, but of being quite sure she can save someone else from having to go through the same agony. To feed the infant the food of divine wisdom is well, but to thrust him into the fire of premature transformation is to deprive him of his choice as a human being. Many women do this when they unconsciously lay on their sons the burden of their own unlived inner quest, thrusting them inexorably into the priesthood or similar "spiritual" vocation at an early age. Of this particular child we are told that all his life long the food of the goddess made him wiser than other men, but thanks to his mother, he remained a man, retained his human fate and his human dignity.

As is the way with myth, this in no way invalidates the other meaning—the danger of overprotection. There are very few mothers who do not react as this one did when they see the Great Mother, life itself thrusting their child—their outer or their inner child—into the fire. Only when she herself will accept the Demeter experience is she strong enough to consent to this. This is why the woman's experience of the dark is so often expressed in myth by the descent of the child, daughter or, more often, son, into hell. It is a more terrible experience for

the feminine psyche than her own descent. The woman does not hang on the cross. She stands at its foot and watches the torment of her son. This is an image expressing the truth that immortality can only be realized through the sacrifice of the most precious thing of all—and that for a woman is her child, whether of the flesh or of the spirit. Christ was the Word Incarnate and his life's work was mocked and spurned and came to ignominious failure. Mary was the mother incarnate and her sacrifice was quite simply the complete acceptance of that which happened to her son, which meant the death of every shred of possessiveness. Every archetypal story tells of course of the experience in its pure form. It is the theme upon which the endless variations in the individual psyche are built.

Demeter's effort to transmit immortality to the unconscious child may also be seen as an attempt at a short cut, if we think of the child for a moment as her own new consciousness. After a partial awakening it is easy to imagine that we have already arrived, or that the "baptism of fire" can now take place immediately through some kind of miracle or through self-imposed, dramatic purging—that we won't need to suffer it through in actual experience over the years. Demeter has a long road to travel before she comes to the Holy Marriage of the mysteries and the birth of *the* divine child. Paradoxically it is the failure of this attempt to play the goddess and use her powers on the human child that recalls her to her true goddess nature. She remembers who she is, reveals herself, and immediately begins to prepare for the passing on of her vision, her essence, on an altogether different level—the symbolic level of the mysteries.

Demeter's center of gravity has changed, and she orders a temple to be built for her in Eleusis. It seems totally illogical that at *this* point she orders the temple to be built, for there is still a long road to be traveled before the opposites can be reconciled, before that which is to be worshiped and experienced at Eleusis is understood by Demeter herself. But myth, particularly feminine myth, is not logical. Its truth is of another order. Demeter has emerged from her wholly personal grief; she consciously knows that she is living a great mystery and that no matter how long her suffering may last, the end of it is certain. *The Heiros Gamos*, The Holy Marriage, which is the unity of all opposites, is an established possibility—she *remembers* her true nature. It is a moment of recognition, a kind of remembering of that which somewhere at bottom we have always known. The current problems are not solved, the conflicts remain, but such a person's suffering, as long as he or she does not evade it, will no longer lead to neurosis but to new life. The individual intuitively glimpses who he is.

So the goddess remembers herself and builds her temple, within which she now encloses herself, and in which she sits down again in a grief more terrible than before. It is not regression; it is her cave of introversion. Whereas at first she had simply surrendered to her sorrow, she now enters consciously into it. She is in a ritual, holy place, contained. She does not yet know the solution, but she herself must accept the dark, and inner death, if her daughter is ever to return to the light of day. And as the Goddess withdrew, so the earth dried up and withered, the sap of growth departed, and the land lay dying. The wasteland around the Fisher King in the Grail legend carries the same meaning—when it is time for a transformation of the whole personality, the birth of a totally new attitude, everything dries up inwardly and outwardly and life becomes more and more sterile until the *conscious* mind is forced to recognize the gravity of the situation, is compelled to accept the validity of the unconscious.

The gods now become frantic at what is happening on earth—pretty soon there will be no more men to worship the mighty gods of reason! As always happens, they get busy *bribing* Demeter to emerge from her temple and her sorrow—urging her to settle for a pleasant life of peace and honor on Olympus and to forget about her daughter down

below, who can be left to keep the dark powers happy and prevent them from bothering the upper gods. So does reason and the fear of the dark speak to us. "Even if my greatest value does stay buried forever, it is foolish and arrogant of me to make so much fuss about it. I must conquer my misery, stop thinking about it, make the best of things as they are. Surely the great god Zeus must know best, and he is offering me ease and a position of great importance." But Demeter does not for a moment yield to good sense arguments. There can be no half-way solution, no stopping at the state of separation of the opposites. She is deaf to all the entreaties and appeals of every god in turn. She uses the invincible weapon of the woman who, when something utterly irrational and against all conscious values rises up from the root of her being, simply sits still and refuses to budge. No man can resist this, but unfortunately we too often use this tool when we are moved not by a real intuition from our roots, but by our overpowering emotional possessiveness or an animus opinion.

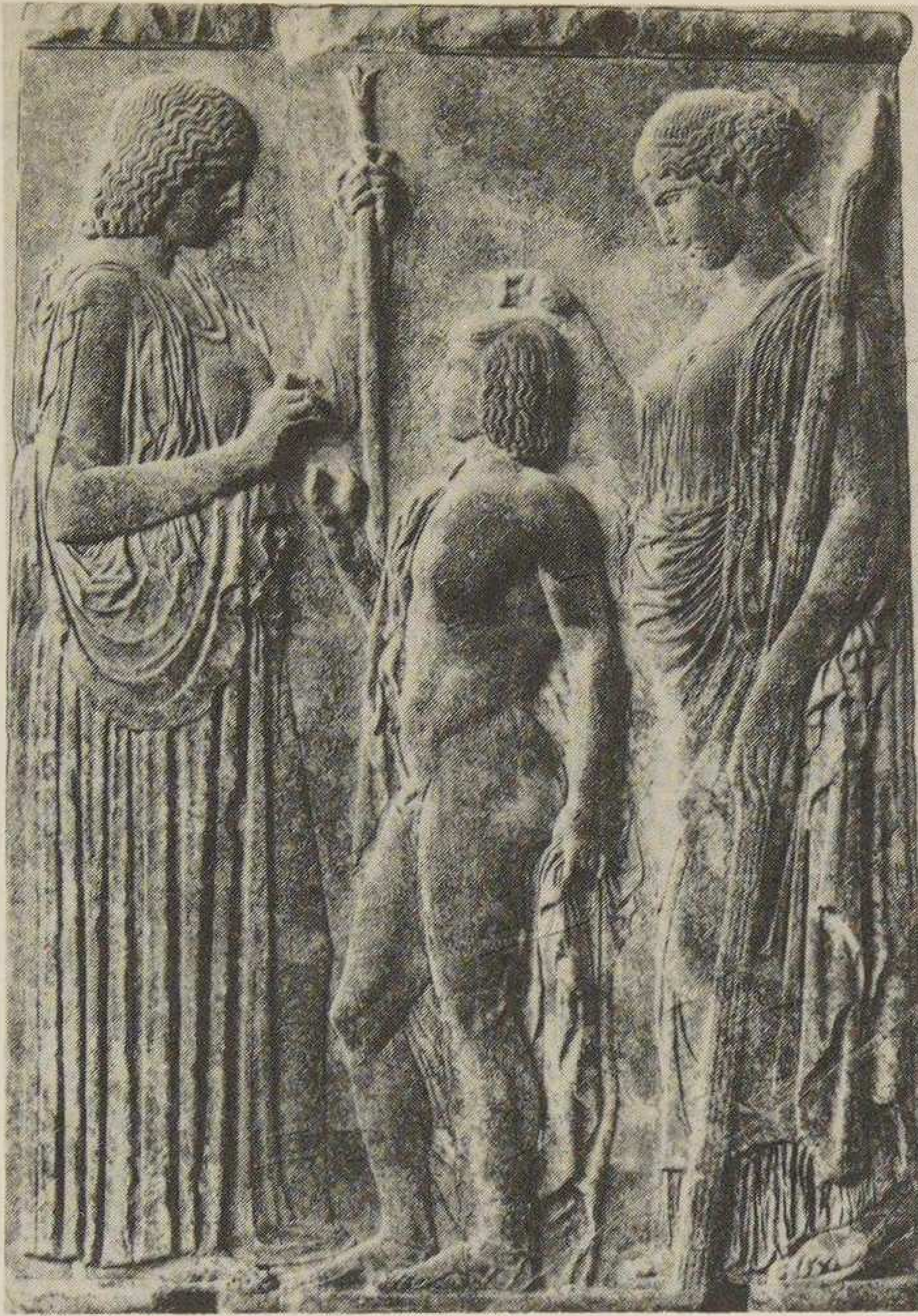
The gods give in to Demeter, of course, and at last the conscious and the unconscious, the masculine and the feminine begin to pull together. It seems at first simply a capitulation of consciousness to the regressive longing of the mother. Zeus sends Hermes to tell Hades he must give Persephone back and restore the status quo, for Zeus himself cannot produce the solution which reconciles the opposites. Only when Hades the Lord of Death, Zeus's dark brother, will cooperate can the answer come. It is he who gives Persephone the seed of the pomegranate to eat—and she, who has hitherto rejected all food—refused to assimilate the experience—now in the moment when she is full of joy at the thought of not having to accept it, takes the pomegranate seed involuntarily, but voluntarily swallows it. In spite of her protests, she really has no intention of regressing to identification with her mother again. This is an image of how the saving thing can happen in the unconscious before the conscious mind can grasp at all what is going on. There are many dreams in which the dreamer tries to return to an old thing or situation but finds, for example, the doors barred or the telephone broken. The ego still yearns for the status quo but further down the price has been paid, and we *can't* go back. Hence the great value of dreams in making us aware of these movements below. Even Demeter in her conscious planning, still half yearns for her daughter to return as before; but her questioning is quite perfunctory. As soon as she knows the seed has been eaten, there is no more said on the subject—all is joy. Persephone has eaten the food of Hades, has taken the seed of the dark into herself and can now give birth to her own new personality. So also can her mother. They have both passed through death to the renewal of a new spring—the inward renewal which age need never lose—and have accepted the equal necessity of winter and life in the darkness of the underworld.

The two become Demeter-Kore instead of Demeter and Kore. Now, to complete the unity, Hecate joins the others; she too is united to Persephone, becoming from that day her "queenly comrade," mother, maiden, and sibyl—the threefold nature of woman made whole. The images unite; they no longer merge or fight or possess each other, and the woman who knows this experience becomes "one in herself."

The Mysteries

Demeter, united to her daughter, taught the rulers of Eleusis her rites and her mysteries, and these mysteries were for a thousand years a center of the inner religious life of antiquity. It is a measure of the power and depth of experience of the initiates that in all this time the secrets were never revealed by any one of the vast numbers involved. The merest hints leaked out, so that we can only know that certain symbols played a part, but very little about the rituals which led to the final revelation.

It is certain that the rites were not a mystery-drama, not an acting out of the



story of the two goddesses, though each element of the myth was *symbolically* experienced. The initiates gathered in Athens on the first day—anyone could be a candidate if he spoke Greek and was not guilty of the shedding of blood—and went through a purification ritual of bathing in the sea. Probably they had already been through the lesser mysteries of Persephone at Agrai in which water and darkness played a major part, and the candidate experienced the passive suffering of the raped Persephone in the underworld through a conscious act of surrender. After the bathing there was a procession to Eleusis of the purified, bearing torches. Various symbolic actions were performed along the way, and on arrival outside Eleusis there was a time of fasting. The journey and the fasting were the symbols of Demeter's nine days of wandering and grief; Eleusis itself was the place of the *finding*.

It is probable that the rites proper began with a dance. Euripides wrote that on the night of the dance round the "fountain in the square of beautiful dances—the stormy heaven of Zeus begins to dance also, the moon and the fifty daughters of Nereus, the goddesses of the sea and the ever flowing rivers, all dance in honour of the golden-crowned maiden and her holy mother." Already the individual is lifted out of his small, rational, personal ego, and the whole universe is dancing with him.

There was also, it is thought, a communion drink—meal and water, probably, as drunk by Demeter in the king's hall, and the rites moved on through we know not what pattern to the climax of a ritual marriage by violence—not, as one might expect, that of Hades with Persephone, but the marriage of Demeter and Zeus. These are the mysteries of Demeter (not of Persephone, except insofar as she is an aspect of Demeter), of the Great Mother, whose experience of loss and finding led her to the *hieros gamos*, the union of the earth with the creator God, which means the birth of the divine child who is the "whole."

After the sacred marriage, a great light shone and the cry of the hierophant rang out "The great goddess has borne a sacred child—Brimo has borne Brimos." The goddess has acquired a new name which means "the strong one," "the power to arouse terror." Without terror, without experience of the terrible face of God, there can be no divine birth. It must be remembered that Persephone also, in her dark, negative aspect, is Medusa, the Gorgon's head, which she herself sends forth from the underworld—"a monstrosity," says Kerenyi, "the nocturnal aspect of what by day is the most desirable of all things." The birth of the child who bears the name, Brimo, alone can resolve the intolerable tension of these opposites, the child who is Demeter, Persephone, Hecate, Zeus, and Hades in one living image. The child is a boy, but also a girl, the androgynous fruit of the holy marriage. It is known that a single child initiate played a part in the mysteries, and that this could be either a boy or a girl, as the omens should decide.

The marriage and the birth, however, were not the final revelation. The most

profound vision of all, the actual experience of immortality came in deep silence, when a mown ear of corn was held up and *seen* by the initiate. Nor can words ever accompany such an experience. The ancients said that at this point the idea of immortality "lost everything confusing and became a satisfying vision."

The mown ear of corn is a perfect symbol of immortality, of eternal rebirth. It is the fruit of life, the harvest, which feeds and nourishes, it is the seed which must sink into the earth and disappear in order to give birth again. It is mown down in the moment of its ripeness, as Persephone was mown down and torn from her mother, as every achievement in our lives outer or inner must be mown down in order to give birth to the new. It is the mother who nourishes, it is the seed of the father, and it is the child born of them both, in one image. The elevated Host in the Mass is the same symbol, the same silent epiphany, "showing forth" of immortality, with a tremendous added dimension. Bread is that which has been produced by man from the raw grain. *Consciousness* is added to the purely natural symbol, for Christ has consciously lived the myth. His initiates too must experience the mowing down, the burial and the rising again in a conscious realization of the Christ within. "Unless a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it remaineth alone, but it if die, it bringeth forth much fruit." That which must die is not the evil and the ugly but the thing of greatest beauty and meaning, the maiden of stainless innocence, so that we may finally know that over which death has no power.

There is evidence that the final act at Eleusis was the setting up of two vessels which were tipped over, so that the water flowed towards the east and the west, the directions of birth and death. Thus the ritual began and ended with water, symbol of the unconscious beginnings of all life and of the wise spirit of the conscious end—the living water "springing up into eternal life."

It should be stressed that the rites at Eleusis were neither an allegory nor a miracle but a mystery. An allegory exists in the realm of ordinary knowledge; it is a metaphor, a story, reflecting, for example, the cycle of the seasons or speaking of the living on of man in his descendants—facts which we all know of but which have for the most part, little power to affect or change our personalities. As Kerenyi says, "There is a vast difference between knowing *of* something and knowing it and being it." Of the difference between miracle and mystery, he writes that a miracle causes people to talk endlessly about it, whereas the true mysteries are kept silent so that they may transform us from within through the symbols which in Jung's words "alone can reconcile the warring opposites, conveying to man in a single image, that which is thought *and* feeling and beyond them both."

The Homeric hymn ends with the words "awful mysteries which no one may in any way transgress or pry into or utter, for deep awe of the gods checks the voice. Happy is he among men upon earth who has seen these mysteries; but he who is uninitiate and who has no part in them never has lot of like good things once he is dead, down in the darkness and gloom." The ancient hymn thus asserts the three essentials of all the mystery rituals of all the religions. First, the rites must not be transgressed, altered in any way; second, they must be accepted without analysis and without question; third, they must not be spoken of, must be kept absolutely secret.

It is immediately obvious that modern man, even in the Roman Church which has been the guardian of the Christian mysteries for so long, is busy breaking all these essentials of a ritual mystery. We are changing it, we pry into everything, and we speak about it all incessantly. The element of awe is being deliberately banished. All this is not something which can or should be avoided. The growth of consciousnness inevitably and rightly means that we pry into, we question everything with our hungry minds, and to try to stop this would be futile obscurantism. But it is equally futile

and an arrogant folly to imagine that having banished the mystery from our outer cults, we can now dispense with it altogether. Then indeed, we shall end up in the "darkness and gloom" denying reality to the psyche itself and its truths. Without vision, without mystery, all of our fine intellectual understanding and its great values turn to dust.

The hymn refers to the fate of the initiate after death. In this context Kerenyi writes, "The 'eidola' in the realm of the dead...are the images with which the deceased individual, through his uniqueness, has enriched the world." Only to the extent that a man has lived his unique individual meaning does he attain to immortality. Persephone was called "the eternally unique" because she had united the two worlds, the dark and the light.

Surely the meaning of the dogma *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, is that there is no salvation without experience of the mystery. It became a cruel and bigoted statement when it was interpreted in the literal outer sense (a kind of interpretation from which all the great dogmas of the Church have suffered immeasurably), and it gave sanction to such horrors as the Inquisition. The Ecumenical movement today is tackling this distortion on its own level with arguments of reason and good sense, but it misses the essential point, which is that man should recognize and experience the level of his being where this dogma is eternally and *individually* true. Outside the "Church," outside the mystery, there is no salvation.

When the outer cult loses its "mana" for a man, then the mystery falls into the unconscious and must there be rediscovered by the individual journeying alone in the dark places to the experience of the symbols within. When images of power and beauty rise up in dreams or fantasies, they make an immediate impact. We are in awe before them. Sometimes there comes a specific dream of initiation which may alter the whole course of a man's life. Such images are not something thought up or pried into, they cannot be altered, and instinctively we sense that they must not be spoken of except to another "initiate." When one does expose them wrongly, one can *feel* the power go out of them. Although their details are individual, unique, they link a man to the whole experience of mankind, and their impact can be immensely increased through a knowledge of the content and meaning of ancient myth, of the eternal themes which have embodied through the ages the truths of the human psyche. Our individual images may invoke perhaps, the dance of the primitive, or the flood or Demeter-Kore, Isis-Osiris, the Buddha's Flower sermon, the Zen Master's koan, and, for us in the West most powerfully of all, the birth and death of Christ, the bread and wine of the Mass. The analyzing mind which has destroyed mystery is thus linked again to the immediacy of the inner experience, and the redeeming symbol is reborn.◇

Caitlín of Kilcummin

An Irish tale by Carolyn White

Children grow up straight and tall in Kilcummin but never a one was as tall as Caitlín O'Flaherty. When only a girl she was as tall as a man, and when a woman a good head taller. Although her manners were gentle, the people of Kilcummin feared her, for it was not right for any woman to stand so tall. Moreover she had a strange way of piercing to the heart of things as if she saw the truth hidden in appearance. She knew their secrets, or so they felt, the people of Kilcummin, and hence avoided her.

Even the fairies she set on edge, for she had no fear of them and never hesitated to cross their fields or linger in their trees. Oengus, the fairy king, could not endure her. He heaped curses upon her and changed himself first into a stag with a hundred eyes and next into a snake with a pig's snout, but she always laughed at his illusions in a fine grand manner and picked the dainty man up in her hand and pulled his cap over his eyes. How his dignity was offended when she called him "silly little thing" and cuffed him like a child! And it must be owned that he was mean and petty as such ones can be. Oengus too felt she knew more about him than he knew himself, and this enraged him.

Caitlín minded neither the people of Kilcummin nor the fairies, but worked steadily at her mending. There was no thing she could not fix; and thus with tinkerings and patches she provided for her parents in their old age, until one day her father became sick and died. Her mother, too, soon lay on her deathbed. She called her daughter and, putting her arms around her said, "Caitlín dearest, since the time has come for me to die I must tell my secret. Like a daughter you have been to me. But I do not know your heritage nor your place of birth. On the doorstep my husband and I found you without rag or note and so we, being childless, claimed you for our own. But though I do not know your origin, I am sure you come from noble stock, for you act like a great lady. An honor it has been for me to be your mother." With that, she closed her eyes and died.

After the burial of her foster parents Caitlín had little reason to remain in the village of Kilcummin. The people feared her more now she was alone, and no young man would marry a woman so tall. At night the fairies played their shrill pipes outside her window so that she could not sleep. A few weeks later she packed her things in a kerchief and left Kilcummin, hoping to find her true home.

She had not traveled long when she saw a fat man, with a short tunic barely covering his rump, crying by the roadside. "Can I help

you, sir?" asked Caitlín. "Ah, no one can help me," sobbed he, "my cauldron is broken, and so it will ever be. I have not eaten from it for a thousand years." "If that is your sorrow," said Caitlín, "perhaps I can help you, for I am a mender of sorts." "Little good it will do," sobbed he, "but try if you can."

Caitlín ran her finger along a great crack that split the cauldron in two. "This is easily mended," said she as she plucked a branch from a bramble bush. She laid the thorns crisscross over the crack and pounded them in with a hammer. In less time than it takes to turn boiled water into steam the cauldron was stitched and ready for use. The fat man was beside himself with joy. With one hand he thanked Caitlín and with the other he hurriedly threw mutton chops and potatoes into the pot. There was little doubt he was quite hungry. Caitlín smiled, put her hammer in her kerchief, and bade him farewell. When she was someways down the road the fat man called, "If ever you want for anything, call for Daghda and your call will be answered." Caitlín thanked him and followed the road.

She had not traveled long before she met a spindly old man struggling to lift a spear. With his weak arms he tugged until the veins stood out on his forehead; but not an inch did he raise it. "Can I help you, old man?" asked Caitlín. "Ah, no one can help me," said he, "for this spear is so heavy that none but the olden gods, the Tuatha De Daanan, can lift it, and even they are too enfeebled now. How can anyone sharpen a blade that has been rusting for a thousand years?" "I am young and strong," said Caitlín, "let me see if I can help you." So saying she seized the spear and in less time than it takes a blackbird to eat a worm she had sharpened it upon a stone. She laid the keen-edged spear at the old man's feet and accepted his astonished thanks. Caitlín was someways down the road when he called to her, "If ever you are in danger, call for Lugh and your call will be answered." Caitlín thanked him and continued on her way.

She had walked for some time when she came to the strand, and being quite tired, lay down to sleep. When she awoke she felt that something was the matter with the sea for it lay mute and motionless although a steady wind blew. "It's not right for a sea to be without waves," said Caitlín, "I'll blow some life into it." So saying she stood by the sea's edge, gathered a lungful of air and blew with all her might. As slowly as a snail crosses the road the sea rose until at last the waves crashed upon the shore; and the great voice of the sea roared, "Thank you, Caitlín. Like the gods of old you are. I who have not stirred a thousand years am now spry and

G. Tava
Bri Groda

strong, and able to carry you to Tirnanog, the land of your heart's desire, the island of the fairies, so that all will say that Manannan Mac Lir returns gift for fair gift." "Thank you, very much," said Caitlín, picking up her kerchief, "but to visit the fairies is not my desire. They are a silly mischievous lot who have never been fond of me. So if you please, I would rather be on my way." "Stay!" roared the sea, "I know where your home is, and perhaps your lover." "That is more than I know," said Caitlín, "and if you will take me there I would be much obliged." "Take the curragh banked on the sand," said the sea, "and come to me."

Caitlín did so, and soon she was riding the crest of the sea. In this manner she traveled many days until she grew very hungry. Remembering the fat man she cried, "Daghda, help me." And as fast as a thought a feast of new potatoes and mutton appeared before her. Many days more she traveled and never wanted for food. One day a great ship came bearing towards her, faster and nearer until she could see the fierce, blood-thirsty faces of the marauders aboard. "Lugh, help me," she cried and a bolt of lightning streaked through the sky and cracked open the ship. From then on Caitlín encountered no danger.

The curragh sailed on and on until it neared an island, and Caitlín knew this must be Tirnanog because she felt her heart strongly drawn to this land. A strange feeling she had of returning home. As her boat touched shore, a handsome array of women and men came forward to greet her, each as tall or taller than she. A fat man with a wise face ladled out food from an ever-plentiful cauldron. A fierce-looking man stood on the hill with a keen-edged spear in his hand. And out of the sea walked a man with a gentle face. A handsome young man came forward to greet her, his arms outstretched, "Welcome home, Caitlín De Daanan, daughter of the gods. A thousand years Tirnanog has slept, and its people have languished. And I most of all, for I am Oengus, the once fairy king who taunted you so. Little did I then remember that we were Ireland's gods and that you were destined to be my bride." And in more time than it takes a ship to sail the ocean Caitlín and Oengus embraced and together forever they explore the lost joys of Tirnanog where none grow old and none have cares. Thus ends the story of Caitlín, the tall woman of Kilcummin.

Illustration by G. Tava—J. Brignola

Listening to the Earth

by Seonaid Robertson

It is a few days after I have heard that my mother has died in hospital. We children have been taken away from the dismal, empty house to a farm in northeast Scotland. But that house too, though full of people, concerned, trying to be kind (while dyeing all my clothes black) is also empty, dismal. People speak to me, and I fail to hear them as through glass. Clumsy caresses, touch of furniture, bed mattress, cup handles reach me as dead pressure on my skin, convey no meaning. The world is dead. How shall I go on living in a dead world? Now always cold, even in sunlight, I wander up the field behind the farmhouse towards the wood and sit on a stone wall. The sun is warm, but I am cold, always cold. I put out my hand to touch the granite stones, flecked with crystal, feathered with gray lichen. Through the stone some faint warmth steals into the palm of my hand. Some quiver of a living state. From a stone? The rough-cut rocks are piled on one another to form this boundary wall between field and wood, and rest on the earth. Is it the earth then which sends me this faint tenuous message of comfort? "The rocks remain." The earth keeps turning. When all human contact fails, can its "inanimate" life give me that grain of comfort which means that comfort is still possible?

Long afterwards I read of Rolling Thunder, the Navajo medicine man who speaks of the Earth as a Being, a body with its rivers of veins, its flesh and its breathing, a body which responds to what we do to it. Sealth, chief of the region we now call Seattle, spoke of this movingly when the white men purported to offer payment for that land.

> How can you buy or sell the
> sky, the warmth of the land?
> The idea is strange to us.
>
> If *we* do not own the freshness
> of the air and the sparkle of
> the water, how can *you* buy them?
>
> Every part of this earth is
> sacred to my people.

Teach your children what we have taught our children, that the earth is our mother.

This we know. The earth does not belong to man; man belongs to the earth.[1]

A skirmish with polio at eleven confined me to couch and house for many months. When I could go outside again it was into the mazy, magic world of adolescence. I wanted to feel firm ground beneath my feet, to moon over smooth freckled pebbles, to snuggle close to summer grass. I was drunk on air alone. Released from pain and weakness, free of the confining walls of the house, every outing—even across the nearest field—was a revelation. I fell in love with the world of nature and resented every hour spent apart from it. I wanted to be completely absorbed into the loved one. I thought no one else had ever felt this way and poured out my feelings in singing my inferior adolescent verse when I walked alone. Every sensation was an ecstasy, the subtly different greens of tufty grasses as one lay among them, the spring of colors to a higher key when one dipped a dusty stone in icy running water. But above all, the sense of pulsing life, of an insect intently going about its own serious business on the underside of a leaf, the throbbing warmth of chaffinch eggs in a frail swinging nest.

In the flat northeastern corner of Scotland, a number of isolated rounded hills, of between one and two thousand feet, heave up from the surrounding farmland. The upsurge of this breast shape is not wild but benign, affirming the presence of the underlying primeval Earth, only scratched on the surface by the tractor-combed fields around. One climbs up through bog myrtle and bracken, fringe of the cultivated world, through sparse birches and gorse with its perennial gold splashes. Gently curving slopes now, matted with heather, soft purple through summer and faded dusky pink through winter, till the cairn is reached. The world spreads panoramic below. Raised to the sky yet cradled in the earth I lie prone, drinking in the nourishment which Earth's nearness offers; the smell of thyme, the fragility of harebells up here in the wind, the yellow ladies' bedstraw pressed below my stomach. I prefer to be alone at such moments, open only to the influence of the place. Myths from every pagan culture known to me speak of the earth as our Mother, a very natural concept always known to my distant forefathers who lived literally close to her (earth floors, earth closets, tilling earth, scraping earth over the fragile plantlings, digging earth to receive the bodies of one's parents).

Certain places on the surface of the earth seem to be inherently more sacred than others. The folk who lived in the north and west of Scotland, who are now thought to have developed a high culture before Crete and Greece, seem to have had a sense of the special quality of certain sites and built their sacred monuments on them. We are creatures of earth and standing barefoot on it, we can sense vibration from it. As a student I walked across Scotland, crossed by ferry to the Isle of Skye, and, having lost a shoe in a bog, walked across Skye barefoot to its westernmost crags—nothing between me and the America I was much later to learn to love. Here was a land of a faith much older than Christianity, a land of faerie hills and a faerie flag, a land of mythic monsters. I sat among lichen and seaweed

on the beach of loch Bracadale pondering on the sea-serpent who used to come from it each evening with entwining coils, turning into a dark handsome gallant who lured Hebridean maidens to their fate. The dark progeny, they say, are still scattered about the island. On the other side of Skye, the Old Man of Storr, a natural pillar of rock, rears up as though nature was imitating man in setting up solitary stones as lightning conductors to call the heavenly forces down.

A yet more profound experience for me was the stone circle at Brodgar in the Orkneys. Almost out of sight of any habitation, a great circle stands on a peat ridge between two lochs. As one approaches, the stones are reflected in still water. I slowly step my way from stone to stone touching each in turn, kneeling where they have fallen in the earth, sensing the intense concentration of energy here. In the spaces between the stones the currents zing like electric wires.

The sense of the mystery of the earth has been with me strongly since childhood. That a minute seed is blown or deposited in bird droppings and finds a womb in the earth, that some unseen umbilical cord reaches out in that first root and attaches itself to soil, to dirt—this fills me with amazement, with awe. The earth contains all the minerals and the moisture which will be patterned into a tiny shoot so strong that it can lift a Brooklyn paving stone to seek the light. The earth also contains all the minerals necessary for human life, and converts them into the plants which feed us, invigorate, calm us, or cure our ills. How should we not feel that intimate closeness?

But our lives are poised between the solid and the liquid elements. After an interminably long walk across the dry, porous limestone hills of northern England, one upsurge from the earth of a well or spring seems a miracle, never to be taken for granted. How right the villagers of Derbyshire are to spend dawn-to-dusk days gathering wild flowers to decorate their wells for one weekend of the year, and to go in procession from one to another singing hymns of gratitude. (I remind myself that even the water from the tap came first from the earth.) To lie on the river bank and dabble hot fingers in cold flowing water is to tingle with the beat of earth's pulse, but to plunge in and give oneself up to the water, to float gazing at the sky is to be absorbed into Herself again, changing from solid to liquid state. It is to be an element in Her sacred alchemy. And as to follow

streams inland is to be led by tiny rivulets up into the hills where, in patriarchal and shamanist religions, men have *a*scended to worship their gods. But rivers have also hollowed out caves which are paths to *de*scend into the body of the mother, into her innermost being. I was astonished to find that children who had never seen caves, painted them with intensity and placed teeth or gorgon faces or even a baby inside. The myths are full of cave couplings, cave-births. The great celebration of the Hieros Gamos, the sacred marriage, which would renew not only the life of the crops but of the human soul, was celebrated in the cave at Eleusis.

I have said that this sense of being at one with the earth, of always finding comfort and communion in its solid physical presence, was with me all my life. But it would be less than honest not to confess that I lost it for more than two dark years when the man I loved above all left me for his own good reasons. Just as a person burnt through two layers of skin cannot feel heat or cold or smooth or rough but only agony on bare flesh, so every emotion directed towards me, sympathy, comfort, affection or scorn, all were felt simply as pain. I turned as always to nature. I touched the trees, caressed the rocks, lay stretched on naked earth to get as close to Her as possible. But there was no response, no answering warmth, no quiver of life. I was as a dead person walking in what I experienced as a dead world.

And so I resolved I must go about my job and live out my life.

And thus it was through hundreds of days, until one day, standing on a warm shore I picked up some shells. Their fragile shapes, their lace-like spirals moved me by their hollow beauty. Only for a few moments, cradling in my cold hands these touching relics of lives long gone, I penetrated the living world again. Though months and years of raw flesh remained to be lived through, I knew that the blood would flow through veins again. So it has proved, a resurrection bringing an ineffable sense of gratitude.

Through human generations of birth, love, death, the rocks remain. Rocks are the bones of Earth, the stark structural skeleton. But, the rocks which seem eternal, unmoving, do in fact over eons, battered by wind and rain, break down into fragments which, rubbing against each other, finally

grind to a powder and, under certain conditions, are deposited in the river valleys as clay. We potters inherit nature's work of millions of years when we shape and mold those plastic fistfuls lifted from the ground. This is how I became a potter. Wandering by accident into the basement of my College of Art (where, on ground level and above, all the sophisticated techniques of production were being taught, and the fashionable trends in design being studied) I found and plunged my hands into a tub of clay and was electrified by its smell, its simplicity, its authenticity, its earthiness. I knew I had found my material, though circumstances constantly interrupted our love affair. One takes a piece of shapeless sludge, such as covers great areas of the earth—seemingly inert but in fact vibrant with its own life which, as a craftsman, one must sense and respond to—and forms it to some personal vision. It is impossible to get nearer Earth than this. The spirit informs the pot and in shaping it we form ourselves anew. With a fuel—again from the earth, whether peat, wood, coal, oil—we submit the clay again (our precious pots, our children) to the fire like the blazing heart of earth itself, and turn back our fragile porous vessels to the hard and permanent state of the rocks.

I returned last summer for the first time since childhood to my mother's birthplace above Inverness, and wandered in the wood above to find the "Druid's Circle" of which she had spoken. It was composed of low stones, close set, no space between—how did one enter such a circle without the desecration of climbing over the fallen ones?

I sat within it reflecting on the completion of the circle of my life, a being of earth, within illimitable spirals of time:

"I died to mineral and plant became
Died from the plant and took a sentient frame
Died from the beast and donned a human dress
when by my dying did I ere grow less?"

Rumi

Notes:

1. Chief Seattle's Testimony *(London: Pax Christi, 1976).*

Śakti: *The Essence of the World*

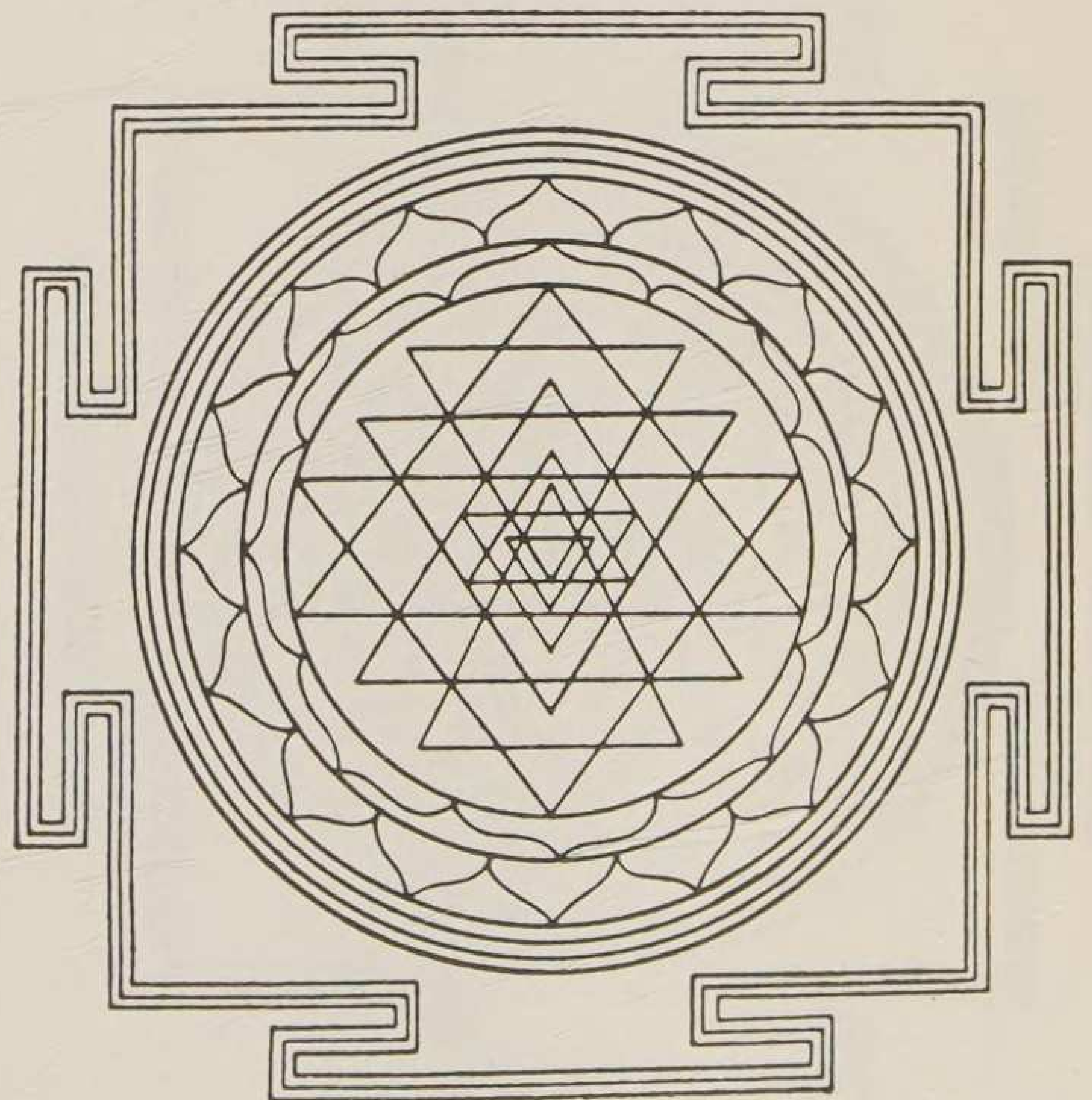
by Heinrich Zimmer

The central concept of Tāntric ideology is *śakti*. Energy is held to be the essence of the world and each personification of the Divine is seen as only one of the forms energy elects in order to make itself manifest. Eternal, divine *śakti* divides itself into countless individual personifications of the Divine. The idea of *śakti* therefore frees the grand figures of the Hindu pantheon both from their autonomy as individuals and from their contentious rivalry with one another as a group, reducing them to the elemental concept they always had in common: divine energy. *Śakti* is the substance of the Divine: the diverse shapes it assumes are but apparitions. The emergence of the idea of *śakti* puts an end to a prolonged, ancient struggle for pre-eminence among separate ways one conceives of the Divine. Even though these ways vary in representing the richness of divine power and glory, they are of equal rank because each and every one, as a mere manifestation of the Divine, is subordinate to that idea ultimately constituting the divine nature: to *śakti*, to divine energy.

The symbol of *śakti* is the triangle—*the* graphic emblem of the Divine-Feminine. Because *śakti* manifests itself in a variety of aspects as divinity and person in one, the triangle in its various combinations expresses the diverse forms of the god's individuation.* Since the triangle as a whole is meaningful, each of its parts is imbued with special meaning as well. By reason of its simple structure, the triangle could be charged, segment by segment, with these conceptual values into which the ideal essence—symbolized by the whole triangle—could be subdivided. Understood in this way the graphic symbol opened the gates to an elaborate development of an occult language of linear images, the segments of

* The term "individuation" is not used here as it is in Jungian psychology but rather in reference to Tāntric metaphysics. It is one of the fundamental tenets of Tāntra that unity is reality and that multiplicity is ultimately illusion. Yet, from the individual's perspective, primordial energy (*śákti*) takes on countless different forms; this is "the god's individuation."

Srī-Yantra

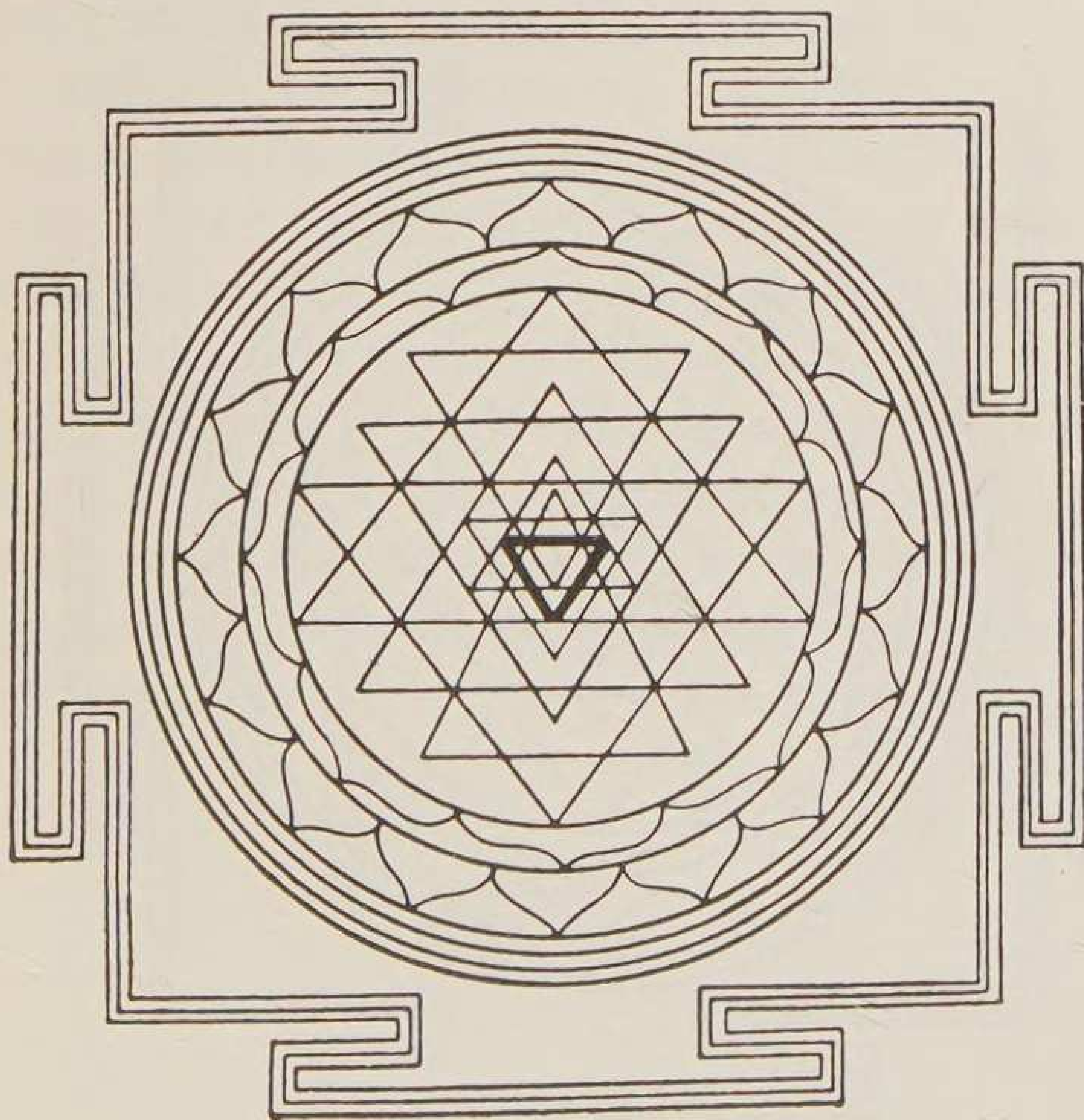


which symbolize the individual components of a divine essence.

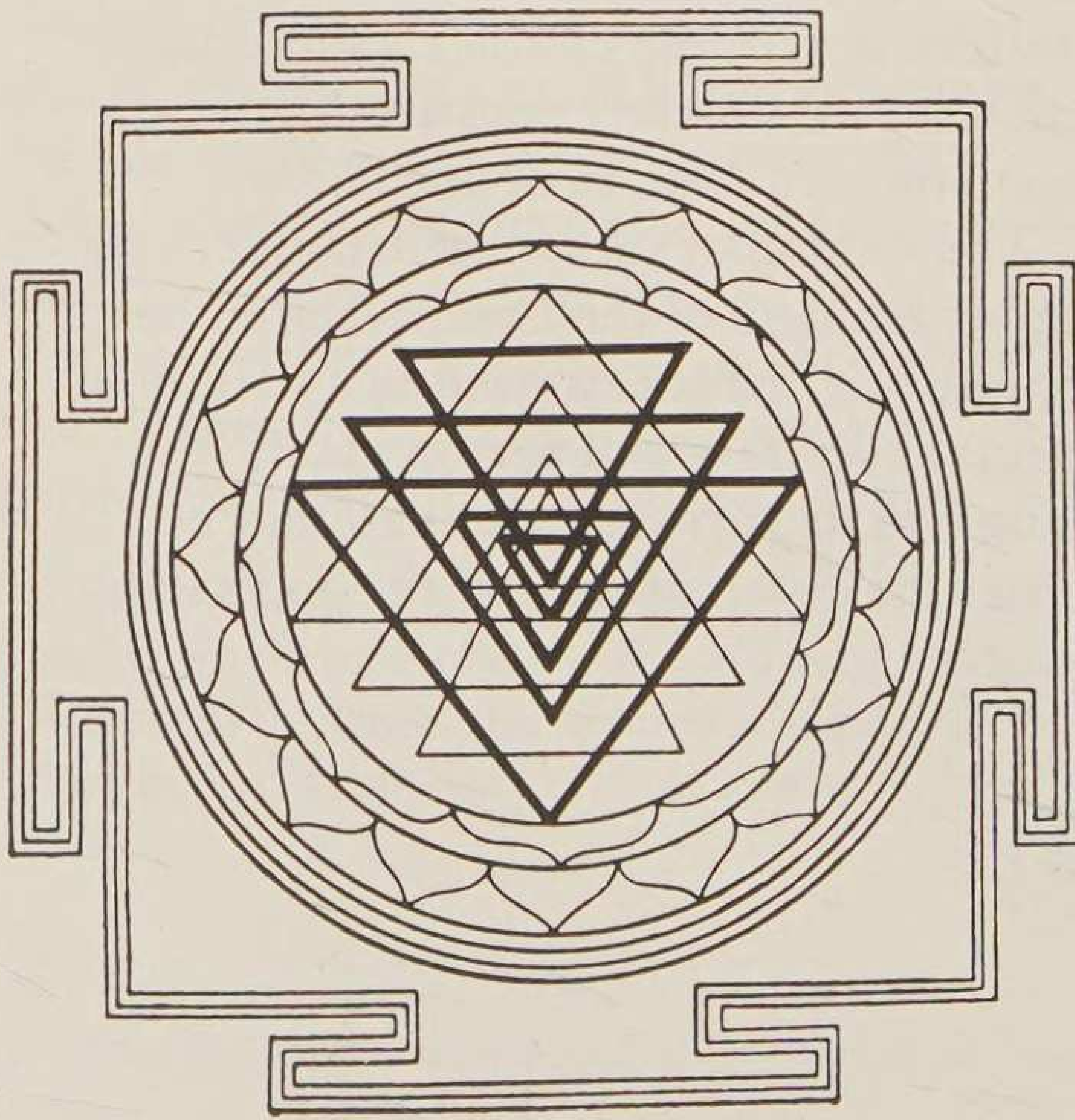
As a symbol, however, the triangle signifies not only *śakti*, "The Eternal Feminine" of the Divine Cosmos, but also its antipode; a similar result of the Divine Cosmos' unfolding itself when it separates into diametrically opposite poles and qualities. We might deduce this from the concept of the Divine as undifferentiated and without attributes if we were to study a figure like the Srī-Yantra. If the triangle were only a symbol of the Feminine, only *yoni*, then the Supreme Divine would be purely and simply the Feminine, since triangles take up the middle area of the figure and comprise its significant nucleus. The Supreme Divine would then not be an undifferentiated state devoid of attributes, but rather fixed to one pole and a single set of attributes. Moreover, we could not explain how this lone Feminine-Divine could develop such a profusion of figures all by itself. In the case of the Srī-Yantra, we are apparently to interpret the dynamism of the pairs of triangles, which interpenetrate with their apexes facing one another, as symbolizing the life-engendering union of male and female poles. The triangles symbolize the emergence of the Divine without attributes into the joyous play of its unfolding when the procreating force of *maya* begins.

Such a conjecture is corroborated by a commentary to verses describing the Srī-Yantra.[1] At the beginning of the instructions for outlining and drawing the Srī-Yantra figure, the commentary establishes some general rules and definitions (*paribhāsā*) applicable to the subsequent elaborations. The instructions discriminate between two types of triangle, the *śakti* and the *vahni*, depending on their orientation toward the adept drawing the figure. The *śakti* triangle has its base farthest from the adept and the apex turned toward him (the *sákti* triangles are those "on top" with their apexes down): the *vahni* triangle points away from the adept, with its base located nearest to him. Concerning a triangle pointing toward the adept, the commentary says: "its name is *sákti* and the names of (female) divinities, Pārvati, for example (as the daughter of Himalaya and the consort of Śiva she is the [benign] aspect of the goddess Kālī-Durgā), are synonyms for *śakti*." It is, therefore, a symbol of all female manifestations of the Divine. The commentary gives a corresponding descrip-

The central sâkti *triangle*



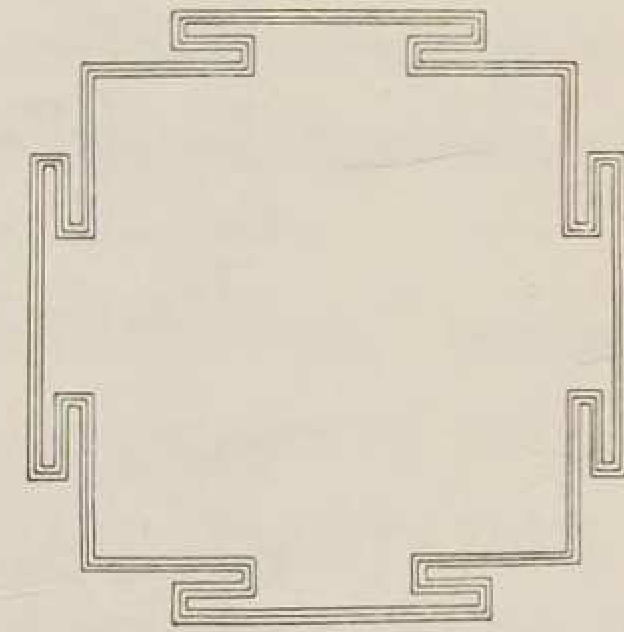
The sâkti *triangles*



tion of a triangle pointing out and away from the person of the adept—whether drawing or meditating—and into the *śakti* triangle: "its name is *vahni*, and names of (male) divinites, Śiva, for example, are synonyms for it."[2] The word *vahni* is masculine in gender—*śakti* is feminine—and has the primary meaning of "fire" but is also a general designation for male divinities.[3] In the Srī-Yantra, four male triangles interpenetrate five female ones, and we are to visualize, in dead center, a dot (which may be missing in the yantra as drawn); added to the innermost *śakti* triangle, this dot completes the ultimate pair of triangles. The symbol as a whole has the force of an image of vibrant creative ecstasy, ecstasy of the eternally engendering divine powers whose essence is found in the fusion of their opposing poles. ◇

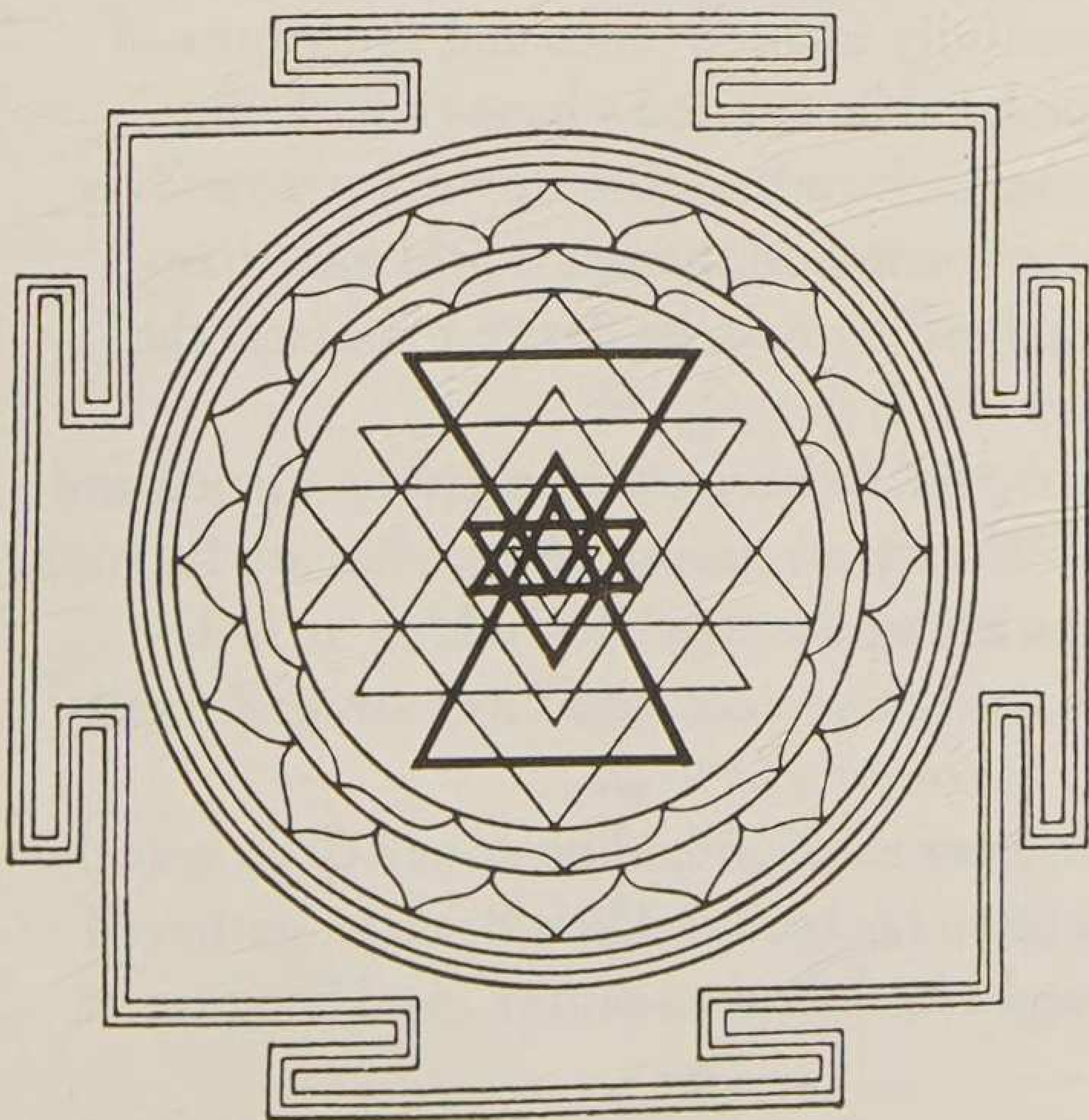
Footnotes

1. *Bhāskararāya in his commentary* Setubandha *("bridge")* *to the* Nītyaśodasikarnāva ("Sea of the Sixteen Eternal Figures of the Divinity"*), ed. H.N. Apte, Ānandāsrama Sanskrit Series, Vol. 56, Poona, 1908.*
2. Ibid.
3. *Along with the masculine word* "vahni," *a neuter one occurs with a similar range of meaning:* tejas, *"fiery energy." Like* śakti *it stands for energy and power. On the one hand,* tejas *characterizes the external form and essence of the (masculine) sun which, according to ancient tradition, is the very seat and sanctuary of everlasting eternal life, just as it symbolizes the king's essential nature—the dazzling display of power; on the other hand,* tejas *distinguishes the yogi above all men, who has transformed all his energy, beginning with his generative power, into a miraculous, magical force and keeps it stored up within himself, ready for discharging; finally, it has the straightforward meaning of sexual potency and male sperm as the most elemental manifestation of the vital, divine energy found in man.*

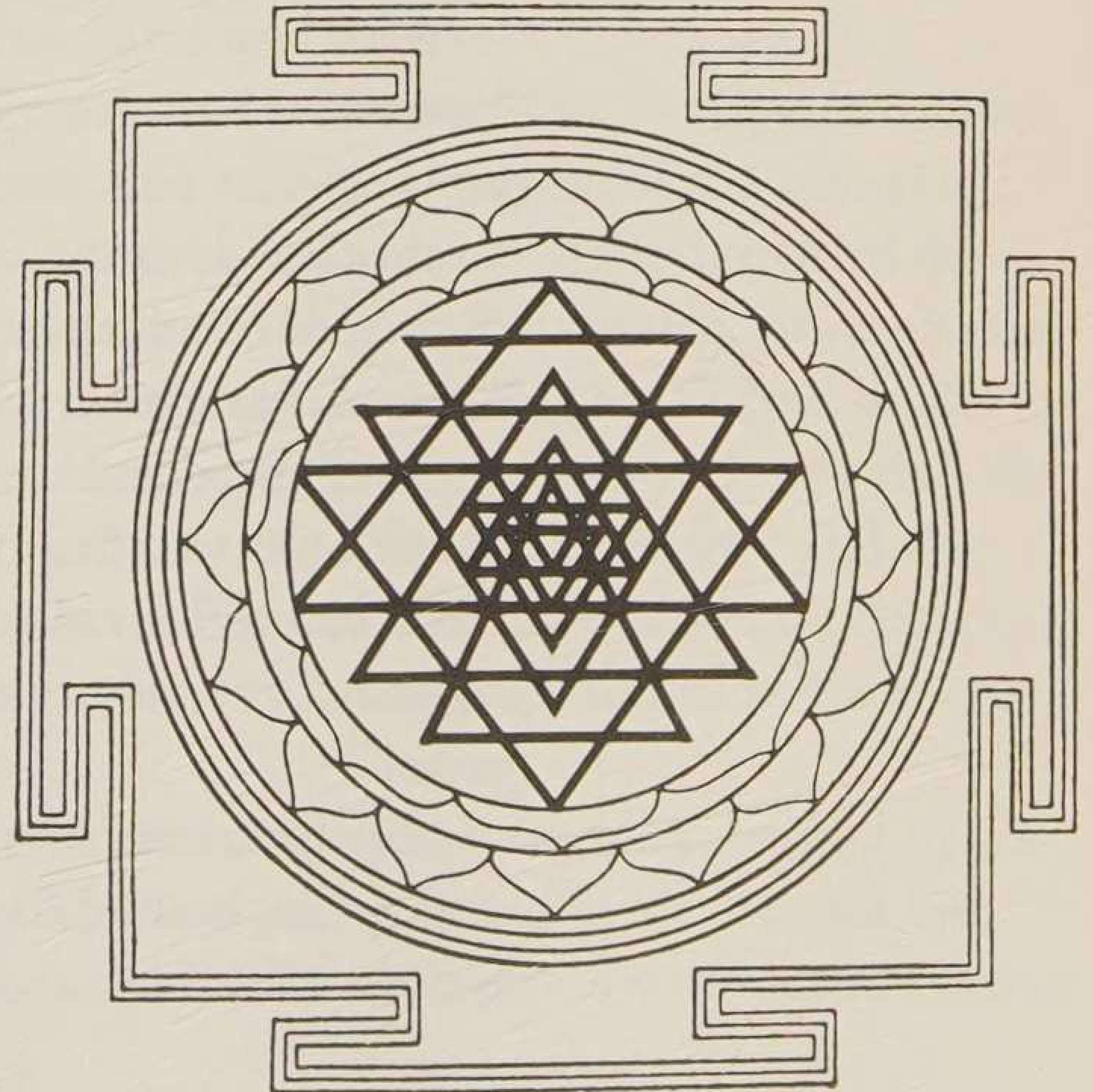


This extract is part of Heinrich Zimmer's Artistic Form and Yoga in the Indian Cultic Image, *Berlin, 1926. The translation of this book, previously unavailable in English, is being prepared by Gerald Chapple and James Lawson with the assistance of J. Michael McKnight, and will ultimately appear in the Bollingen Series, Princeton University Press.*

Interpenetrating pairs



The sâkti *and* vahni *triangles*



The Eternal Dance of the Universe

"The Eternal Dance of the Universe" was adapted by Diane Wolkstein from Joseph Campbell's translation of Heinrich Zimmer's "Four Episodes from the Romance of the Goddess," published in The King and the Corpse. *This version was originally told in the series "Winter Tales for Adults" at the New School in New York City.*

The Creator Brahma sat in serene meditation. Around him in a circle stood his ten mindborn sons and the ten world guardians. They watched as Brahma sank into himself with a vision, and each time an apparition appeared in bodily form.

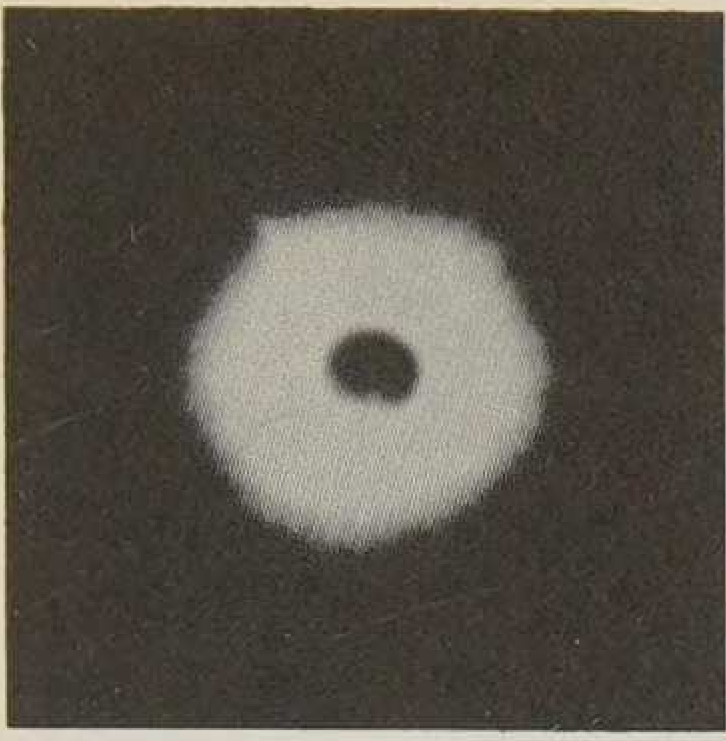
Brahma plunged suddenly into the depths of his own darkness, and to the surprise of the assembly there stood a beautiful, young, naked woman. She was Dawn—with glistening blue-black hair, eyes like dark lotuses, a face as round as the moon, and upturned, dark-tipped breasts.

The assembly stared at her in astonishment. She, in turn, laughed a soft rippling laugh which brought Brahma out of his trance so that he wondered, as did all who gazed at her, for what purpose in the unfolding of the creation this amazing apparition might have been summoned.

Then a second surprise. From Brahma's wonder another creature came into being. He was a youth—dark, strong, and splendid—with powerful and beautifully formed limbs and the aroma of blossoms about him. In one hand he carried a banner with the emblem of a fish; in the other, a bow and five flowery arrows. As Brahma and his ten mindborn sons and the ten world guardians stared, desire crept into each of them—the desire to possess the woman, Dawn.

So Desire entered the world. In his first moment he turned and spoke boldly to Brahma, "What is my name? And what am I to do? Each being flourishes when doing the work for which he is designed. Give me my name, and since you are a Creator, give me a wife!"

Brahma was silent a moment. What had he done? Who was this creature who had slipped from his being? Then Brahma gathered his consciousness and brought his being to center. And because he



was Brahma, the divine original consciousness, when he saw the truth he spoke the truth, even if it meant that his own power might be lessened.

"You will wander the earth with your bow," Brahma said, "and no creature will be able to escape the aim of your arrows. Your task is to send your arrows into the hearts of men, women, and gods, arousing bewilderment and delight and thus assuring the continual creation of the world."

Then Daksha, the lord of the ten world guardians, said to the youth, "Your name is Kama, God of Love, and your arrows will be stronger than those of Brahma, Vishnu, and even Shiva. You are the All-Pervader. We are all in your power."

When Kama heard these words, he turned toward the assembly, drew his bow taut, and let his arrows fly:

Intoxicating breezes permeated the assembly;
Heavy scents of spring flowers brought rapture.
The gods stumbled...they reeled from side to side.
They stared at the woman Dawn...they quivered...
One by one...the gods went mad:
They gaped...they groaned...Brahma broke into a steam...
Daksha and the world guardians began to smoke

The quivering and shaking caused a rumbling in the firmament, and in the far distant mountains, the arch-ascetic of the universe, Shiva, was disturbed in his concentration. He drifted toward the Love Constellation and when he beheld the infatuated Brahma and the gaping flock, he burst into laughter: "Well, well! And what is all this? Brahma, have you forgotten that you yourself revealed the laws in the Rig Vedas? 'The sister shall be as the mother and the daughter shall be as the sister.' The universe is founded on constancy. How can you permit yourself to lose your balance at the mere sight of a woman?"

At these words Brahma's mind split in two. He returned to his True Being; yet a part of him was still gripped by desire and lust. Waves of heat streamed down Brahma's limbs. Sweat poured down

the bodies of the world guardians. From Daksha's sweat a woman, gleaming like burnished gold, appeared. Daksha gave her to Kama as a wife, and called the first wife "Rati" which means delight.

At last Brahma was cleansed of his lust. But though Shiva had withdrawn to his place of meditation, the sting of Shiva's words did not leave him. He had been rebuked before his holy sons. He burned with humiliation.

"Why was it that Shiva was not moved by a woman?" he fumed. "If Shiva continued to remain aloof from all the universe, how would he be able to carry out his appointed task? If he remained forever in a rocklike state of meditation, how would he be able to destroy the great ones of the earth when renewal was necessary?"

As Brahma came out of his meditations he saw the young God of Love, Kama, joyfully united with the beautiful Rati, and he spoke to them; "How blissful and radiant you are. What joy there is in seeing you together. You must go to the mountain tops where Shiva lives and set him on fire with love so that he, too, will take a wife and join us in the eternal dance of the universe."

Kama answered, "If you order it, I will go. But if I succeed in stirring the rocklike Shiva, where is the woman who can arouse him? Nowhere do I behold such a woman for Shiva."

"I shall create her," Brahma replied. "Now go."

When the Love God had departed, Brahma spoke with Daksha: "Who can Shiva's future wife be? What possible woman does he hold in the depths of his spirit? Yet there is only one. She is Maya—The World Illusion—The Enchantress. She is Shakti, the Energy of the World; she can take on any form. She is the one who will beguile him. Daksha, you must go and with proper offerings persuade Shakti to be born as your daughter and then to become Shiva's bride."

Daksha understood the wisdom of Brahma's suggestion and took himself to the other side of the divine Milky Ocean, across the timeless sea where Vishnu sleeps and dreams the dream of the world. There he prepared himself to make offerings to the Great Goddess who is the manifestation of Vishnu's dream. With the image of the Enchantress in his mind and heart he went into deep meditation so that by his heat he might be able to animate her image and see the Goddess with his own eyes. For 36,000 years, Daksha remained in a state of prodigious and prolonged concentration, creating his vision of the Goddess.

While Daksha sat meditating the mighty Brahma took himself to the holy mountain, Mandara, and there for 36,000 years he praised with potent syllables the Mother of the Universe. He called to Shakti in her myriad forms:

> Maya—Enchantress—Everlasting Divine Drunkenness of Dream—Lady of the Spheres—Smoky One—Weaver of the World—Wisdom—Compassion—Delusion—The One Who Releases—Maya…

At the end of 36,000 years Maya appeared.

She was dark and slender, with her hair hanging free; and she was standing on the back of her tawny lion.

Brahma greeted her, "Kali, Oh Dark One, oh Goddess, I have called to you because of your power. The Lord of Spirits, Shiva, remains solitary. If he takes no wife the world creation will not continue in its appointed course. Only you can entice and bewitch him into the eternal dance of the universe."

Kali replied, "It is true what you say. I am the Divine Energy of the Universe. From me comes the food of the universe—all that has breath, all that speaks. I make each one what that one wishes to be—great and powerful, weak and helpless, passionate, or full of dreams. Yes, for the sake of the creation I will agree to entice Shiva. When Shiva meditates and goes into the innermost kernel of his heart he will find me there. I will have melted into his heart."

She disappeared, and on the other side of time Daksha saw the Goddess, and she appeared to him on her lion. Her body was dark, and her breasts were mighty. Daksha bowed to her and announced his wish. She answered, "For the sake of the well-being of creation I will grant your wish. I will become your daughter and the wife of Shiva. But if for a single moment you lose proper reverence for me, I will not remain on earth. I will leave my body, whether happy or not."

Full of joy that his wish would be granted, Daksha descended to earth. He married a beautiful woman named Virani, the daughter of Virana, the fragrant grass. Virani conceived at once from the vision of Daksha's soul.

When the child was born and she was a girl, flowers descended from the heavens. Virani did not know that her daughter was Maya, the Mother of the Universe, the Great Enchantress. She only

knew a little infant was wailing, and she took the child in her arms and gave her the breast to suck.

So the child grew. When she played with her small friends she delighted in drawing pictures of Shiva, and when she sang, her childlike songs were of her love for Shiva. Shiva was always in her heart. Her father gave her the most beautiful name. He called her "Sati" which means "She Who Is."

When she became a young woman, she went to the mountains to meditate. Then Brahma with his divine wife, Savitri, and Vishnu, with his divine wife, Lakshmi, went to visit Shiva in his place of peace.

When Shiva saw them, a strange thing happened. The Paragon of Peace was moved by the radiance and bliss in the faces of the two joyous couples, and the smallest trace of desire for woman entered his spirit.

"We have come to you," Brahma said, "for the sake of the creation. I am the Creator, Vishnu is the Preserver, and you are the Destroyer. But if you remain in your state of rocklike meditation, how will you understand passion and be able to destroy when the moment for destruction comes? We have come to ask you to take a wife."

Shiva said, "At every moment I behold the supreme eternity of the True Being. At every moment I keep it before me. Where is the woman who is as consecrated to my work as I am, who is as dedicated to the Highest Vision? If for the sake of the universe I were to take a wife, where is there a woman who would be capable of absorbing my incandescent power, shock by shock?"

Brahma was elated. He said, "She exists! At this moment she is waiting for you and longing for you! Her name is Sati!"

The two couples departed.

Shiva descended to earth to the place where Sati was meditating alone in the mountains. When she opened her eyes and saw Shiva standing before her she was flooded with joy and fell to the ground worshiping his feet.

When Shiva saw Sati he was pleased. "What do you wish?" he asked. "Speak."

But Sati could not utter a word. She could not speak before the one who had moved her heart since she was a child.

Shiva was filled with a longing to hear the sound of Sati's voice and that was the moment Kama, the God of Love, drew his arrow and shot Shiva through the heart. Shiva shuddered. He forgot his True Being and he cried, "Be my wife!"

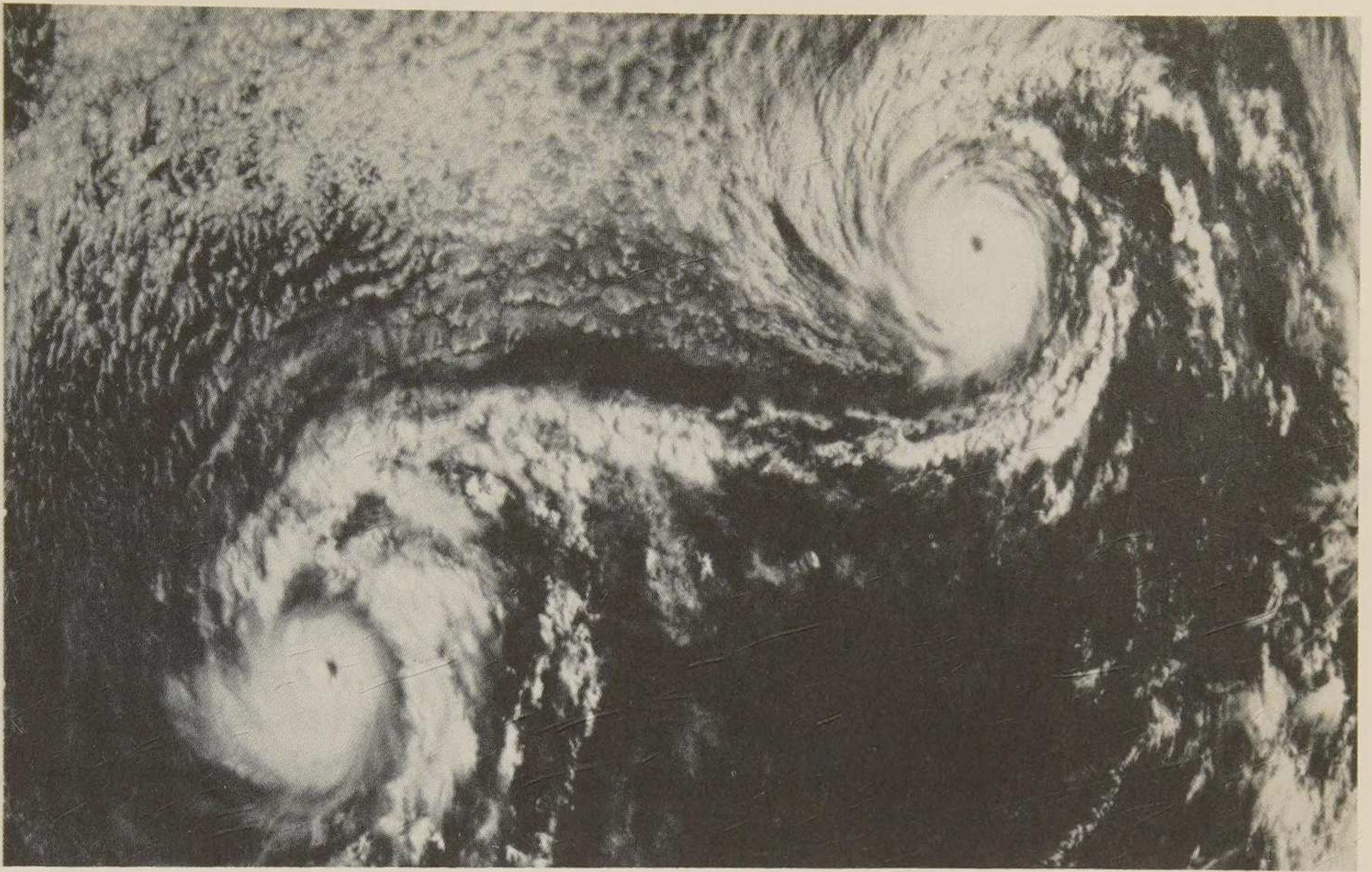
And she said, "Speak to my father."

Shiva thundered, "Be my wife *now*!"

Sati trembled and ran toward her home.

Shiva, the Paragon of Peace, returned to his mountain abode. He directed his thoughts to Brahma, and Brahma appeared.

"Brahma," he said, "you have won. I am powerless. Maya has caught me in her web. Now all I can be, all I can become, is Sati's



husband. You must arrange it. Brahma, speak to Daksha, ask him if he will permit me to marry Sati."

So the wedding of Shiva and Sati was arranged. It was held on the day and at the hour that was most propitious according to the stars.

The bridegroom Shiva arrived accompanied by divine musicians and dancing girls. He wore a loincloth of tiger skins and a live serpent draped from his left shoulder to his right hip. In his hair rested the young moon and a garland of skulls.

The dancing girls whirled, and the divine musicians played. The lesser and greater spirits, all incarnations of the great Shiva, danced. Flowers poured down from the heavens. The whole firmament was gay and brilliant, blown with sweet-scented breezes. All the trees stood forth in blossom.

Solemnly, Shiva received Sati's hand. The gods gave praise and recited verses from the holy vedas.

Then Vishnu spoke and blessed Shiva and Sati, "Sati gleams blue-black and Shiva is fair. Together you will be a protection to the gods and men."

"So be it!" echoed Shiva, and Sati laughed with happiness.

Then Shiva lifted Sati onto his white bull Nandi, and they rode to the tops of the Himalayan peaks. And there they dwelt, and there they played, night and day, and all their play was love.

Shiva went and gathered wildflowers for Sati. He let down her nightdark hair and played with it. Then he knotted it up so that he might loosen it again. He painted her pretty feet with scarlet lac so

that he might hold them in his hands, and he whispered in her ear what he could just as well have said aloud. But in this way he could be closer to her.

In the bowers and by the banks of high mountain streams they tasted each other and played with each other and loved each other. Shiva put a spot of musk on her beautiful lotus breasts and lifted off her necklaces of pearl and set them back again just to touch her softness. He drew off her bracelets and opened the knots of her clothing and tied them back again. He decked her whole body with chains of flowers and swallowed the nectar of her mouth, and Shiva and Sati's desire never ceased. The fountain of their passion was watered continuously by their love.

And so they loved, and the days and nights of 9,000 years passed quickly by.

Once before the rainy season Sati asked Shiva to build a house where they could find rest and shelter.

And the Great God said, "With what would I build it? I have only a loincloth, the serpents that decorate my body, and a skull for a begging bowl."

Still he lifted her up and carried her high above the clouds and there he united with her in love.

Then when the rainy season was over, Shiva asked Sati where she would like to go.

And Sati said, "Let us go to Mt. Himalya."

And there they dwelt for 3,600 years, and Shiva's heart was held entirely by Sati.

Now Sati's father, Daksha, decided at this time to hold a Great Offering to the Supreme Being. He invited every living being in all the reaches of space: the gods and demons, the spirits, clouds and mountains, the rivers and oceans, the men, beasts, birds, trees, and grasses—all beings. There were only two creatures in all the universe he did not invite, and they were Shiva and Sati.

He thought that Shiva who meditates among corpses and carries a skull for a begging bowl would not be fit to attend such an Offering. And, of course, he could not invite his beloved daughter, Sati, if he were not to invite Shiva.

Then Vijaya, the daughter of a sister of Sati, came to see Sati who was alone.

"Dear Vijaya," Sati said. "you have come by yourself. Where are your sisters?"

"They are preparing for the great celebration. All the women in the universe are on their way. I have come to fetch you...Are you and Shiva not coming?"

"Celebration? Where?"

"Oh Sati! Have you not been invited? Your father, Daksha, is holding a Great Offering. Everyone in all the worlds has been invited. Oh *Sati*!"

Sati was struck as if by a bolt of lightning. Anger began to burn in her, and her eyes hardened. She said, "It is because my husband carries a skull for a begging bowl."

And she thought to blast Daksha to ashes with a curse. But then she remembered her words to Daksha: "If ever, for a single moment, you do not show proper reverence for me, I shall leave my body, whether I am happy or not."

As Sati's eternal form became visible to her, she thought, "I will leave this body. I will not stay. The gods will not have what they wish this time. But one day I will return to Mt. Himalya where I have dwelt so long in happiness with Shiva, and I will be born as the daughter of Menaka. I will play, and then I will marry Shiva and complete the work the gods have wished for."

With that she closed the nine portals of her body. She withdrew her breath and braced herself. Her life force shot up through her body and ripped through the top of her skull, and her body slumped to the ground.

When the gods above saw this, they lifted a universal cry of terror. And Vijaya cried, "O Sati! Sati! What have I done? Your poor mother will be shattered by the pain—and how will your heartless father survive? Never to see your dancing eyes and hear your sweet words? O Sati, you were a mother to me. Sati, I am crying. Sati, who but you will ever have such loving kind words for me? O Sati. And who will care for Shiva? *Shiva*! Oooooh!"

In his meditations Shiva heard Vijaya's shriek. He returned at once to their mountain top where his beloved Sati lay crumbled dead on the earth. But love would not allow him to believe she was dead.

Gently he stroked her cheek. "You are asleep?" he said. "Beloved, what has sent you to sleep? Sati, wake up..."

Then Vijaya told Shiva that something inside of Sati seemed to have burst when she had told her that neither she nor Shiva had been invited to the Great Offering.

With these words Shiva's entire being was filled with wrath, and he transported himself to the place where the Great Sacrifice was being held. There he saw that every living creature had been invited: the gods, the planets, the beasts, the fish, the worms, the seasons, the ages of the world. And each was reverently carrying out his role. Only he and Sati had not been asked.

Shiva stepped into the sacred place to destroy the Offering. The Offering, the animal that was being sacrificed to the gods, was so terrified it changed itself into a gazelle and fled away into the skies, seeking refuge in Brahma's realm. Shiva followed. The gazelle sought asylum in Vishnu's realm. Shiva followed. At last the frightened animal darted back to earth and disappeared on a mountain top.

The hiding place it had found was the corpse of Sati.

When Shiva stood once again before the dead body of Sati, he forgot the gazelle. He forgot the Offering. He saw only Sati. And then a great cry of grief came from his throat, and his heart broke.

He looked at Sati—at her lips, her cheeks, her beautiful, dark hair. Her laughter, her kindness, her touch rushed through him, and he broke with grief like a common mortal.

He flung himself to the ground. He crouched by her corpse. Then he got up and ran, but he returned and reached out and touched her body. It was stiff and cold.

He caressed her forehead and cheeks and lips. He undid her clothes, then he fastened them up and opened them again. Then he picked Sati up in his arms and began to walk. He sobbed and he walked, and he sobbed, and he would not let her go.

Vishnu and Brahma watched Shiva, and they knew that Sati's corpse would never decay as long as Shiva held her. So by their craft, Brahma and Vishnu hid themselves in Sati's corpse and as Shiva walked they began to dismember Sati's body.

Her two feet fell, and the place that they fell was called "the Mountain of the Goddess." Not far from there her two ankles fell. And then to the east her womb fell, and nearby her navel: then her two breasts together with a golden necklace, and her shoulders and her neck. Every place a part of her fell became a sacred place and a blessing to the children of the world.

When her head fell, Shiva stopped. He stood and stared and broke into a terrible groan of pain.

The gods drew at once around Shiva and wished to comfort him. When Shiva looked up and saw the gods, he was ashamed and transformed himself into a rock in the shape of a lingam.

The gods praised Shiva, hoping he would return to himself. "Light of all Lights, Shiva, you understand the impermanence of all things, in your form of lingam you are the Highest Being. We tremble before your grief. Shiva! Let your anguish pass. Shiva!"

Shiva remembered his Highest Self that had always been the object of his meditations, but he could not bring his powers to focus. His grief was overwhelming.

At last Shiva opened his eyes. When he saw Brahma, he said, "Brahma, what am I to do?"

And Brahma said, "You must let your pain go. You must let your anguish go. It is only Maya. Return to your True Being. In the whirling dance of the Universe you will find Sati again."

And Shiva said, "Brahma, I can do nothing. Brahma, stay with me until the pain passes, until I come up from the ocean of my loss. Do not leave me, Brahma, stay by me and give me comfort."

And Brahma said, "So shall it be."

Blind with suffering, Shiva took Brahma's hand, and the two gods departed into the solitude of the mountains. They walked until they came to a lake. It was surrounded by holy hermits who were meditating. The lake was quiet, clear, and peaceful.

Shiva sat by the lake and looked into the waters. He saw fish swimming, darting in and out among the lotus stems.

It was beside the waters of this lake of peace that Shiva found his rest. He released himself from suffering and centered himself in the eternity of his True Being. So he remained in deep peace and

meditation until Sati was reborn as Parvati, the daughter of Manaka, Queen of the Mountain.

And by her long sustained meditations, Parvati was able to stir Shiva from his deep place of peace and bring Shiva to her, so that once again, they were united in love.

And once again, the rebirth of the world was assured.

—Retold by Diane Wolkstein

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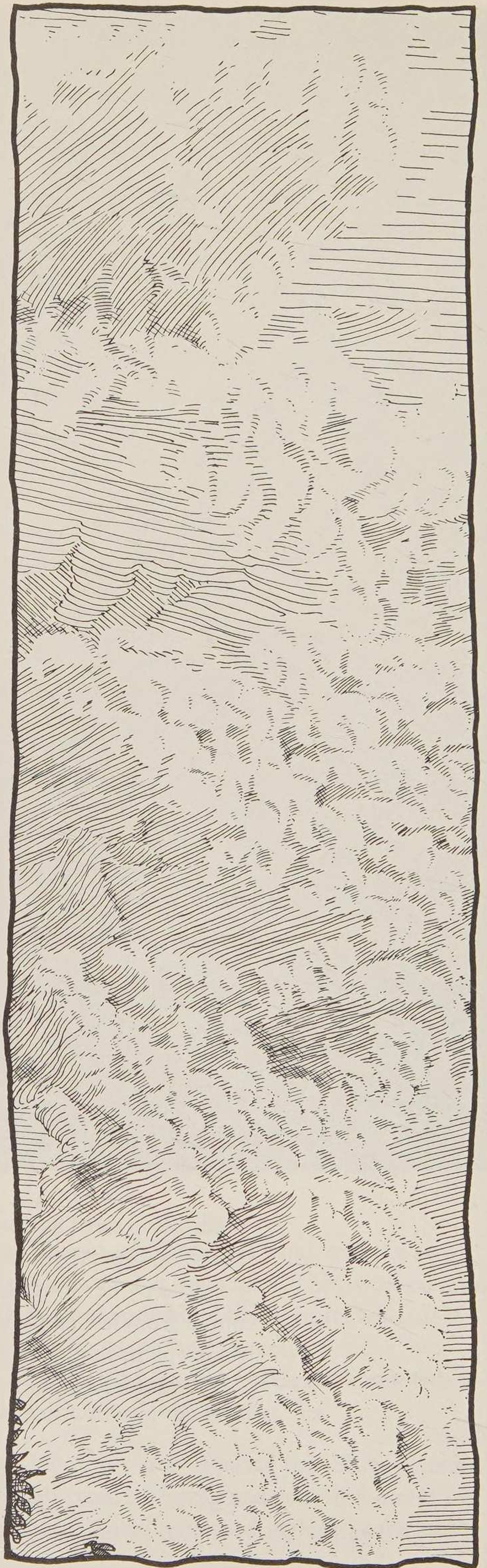
A Very Warm Mountain

by Ursula K. Le Guin

illustration by Henk Pander



An enormous region extending from north-central Washington to northeastern California and including most of Oregon east of the Cascades is covered by basalt lava flows.... The unending cliffs of basalt along the Columbia River...74 volcanoes in the Portland area...A blanket of pumice that averages about 50 feet thick...

—Roadside Geology of Oregon
Alt and Hyndman, 1978.

Everybody takes it personally. Some get mad. Damn stupid mountain went and dumped all that dirty gritty glassy gray ash that flies like flour and lies like cement all over their roofs, roads, and rhododendrons. Now they have to clean it up. And the scientists are a real big help, all they'll say is we don't know, we can't tell, she might dump another load of ash on you just when you've got it all cleaned up. It's an outrage.

Some take it ethically. She lay and watched her forests being cut and her elk being hunted and her lakes being fished and fouled and her ecology being tampered with and the smoky, snarling suburbs creeping closer to her skirts, until she saw it was time to teach the White Man's Children a lesson. And she did. In the process of the lesson, she blew her forests to matchsticks, fried her elk, boiled her fish, wrecked her ecosystem, and did very little damage to the cities; so that the lesson taught to the White Man's Children would seem, at best, equivocal.

But everybody takes it personally. We try to reduce it to human scale. To make a molehill out of the mountain.

Some got very anxious, especially during the dreary white weather that hung around the area after May 18 (the first great eruption, when she blew 1300 feet of her summit all over Washington, Idaho, and points east) and May 25 (the first considerable ashfall in the thickly populated Portland area west of the mountain). Farmers in Washington State who had the real fallout, six inches of ash smothering their crops, answered the reporters' questions with polite stoicism; but in town a lot of people were cross and dull and jumpy. Some erratic behavior, some really weird driving. "Everybody on my bus coming to work these days talks to everybody else, they never used to." "Everybody on my bus coming to work sits there like a stone instead of talking to each other like they used to." Some welcomed the mild sense of urgency and emergency as bringing people together in mutual support. Some—the old, the ill—were terrified beyond reassurance. Psychologists reported that psychotics had promptly incorporated the volcano into their private systems; some thought they were controlling her, and some thought she was controlling them. Businessmen, whom we know from the Dow Jones Reports to be an almost ethereally timid and emotional breed, read the scare stories in Eastern newspapers and cancelled all their conventions here; Portland hotels are having a long cool summer. A Chinese Cultural Attaché, evidently preferring earthquakes, wouldn't come farther north than San Francisco. But many natives were irrationally exhilarated, secretly, heartlessly welcoming every steam-blast and earth-tremor: Go it, mountain!

Everybody read in the newspapers everywhere that the May 18 eruption was "five hundred times greater than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima." Some reflected that we have bombs much more than five hundred times more powerful than the 1945 bombs. But these are never mentioned in the comparisons. Perhaps it would upset people in Moscow, Idaho or Missoula, Montana, who got a lot of volcanic ash dumped on them, and don't want to have to think, what if that stuff had been radioactive? It really isn't nice to talk about, is it. I mean, what if something went off in New Jersey, say, and *was* radioactive—Oh, stop it. That volcano's way out west there somewhere anyhow.

Everybody takes it personally.

I had to go into hospital for some surgery in April, while the mountain was in her early phase—she jumped and rumbled, like the Uncles in *A Child's Christmas in Wales*, but she hadn't done anything spectacular. I was hoping she wouldn't perform

while I couldn't watch. She obliged and held off for a month. On May 18 I was home, lying around with the cats, with a ringside view: bedroom and study look straight north about forty-five miles to the mountain.

I kept the radio tuned to a good country western station and listened to the reports as they came in, and wrote down some of the things they said. For the first couple of hours there was a lot of confusion and contradiction, but no panic, then or later. Late in the morning a man who had been about twenty miles from the blast described it: "Pumice-balls and mud-balls began falling for about a quarter of an hour, then the stuff got smaller, and by nine it was completely and totally black dark. You couldn't see ten foot in front of you!" He spoke with energy and admiration. Falling mud-balls, what next? The main West Coast artery, I-5, was soon closed because of the mud and wreckage rushing down the Toutle River towards the highway bridges. Walla Walla, 160 miles east, reported in to say their street lights had come on automatically at about ten in the morning. The Spokane-Seattle highway, far to the north, was closed, said an official expressionless voice, "on account of darkness."

At one-thirty that afternoon, I wrote:

It has been warm with a white high haze all morning, since six A.M., when I saw the top of the mountain floating dark against yellow-rose sunrise sky above the haze.

That was, of course, the last time I saw or will ever see that peak.

Now we can see the mountain from the base to near the summit. The mountain itself is whitish in the haze. All morning there has been this long, cobalt-bluish drift to the east from where the summit would be. And about ten o'clock there began to be visible clots, like cottage cheese curds, above the summit. Now the eruption cloud is visible from the summit of the mountain till obscured by a cloud layer at about twice the height of the mountain, i.e., 25-30,000 feet. The eruption cloud is very solid-looking, like sculptured marble, a beautiful blue in the deep relief of baroque curls, sworls, curled-cloud-shapes—darkening towards the top—a wonderful color. One is aware of motion, but (being shaky, and looking through shaky binoculars) I don't actually see the carven-blue-sworl-shapes move. Like the shadow on a sundial. It is enormous. *Forty-five miles away. It is so much bigger than the mountain itself. It is silent, from this distance. Enormous, silent. It looks not like anything earthy, from the earth, but it does not look like anything atmospheric, a natural cloud, either. The blue of it is stormcloud blue but the shapes are far more delicate, complex, and immense than stormcloud shapes, and it has this solid look; a weightiness, like the capital of some unimaginable column—which in a way indeed it is, the pillar of fire being underground.*

At four in the afternoon a reporter said cautiously, "Earthquakes are being felt in the metropolitan area," to which I added, with feeling, "I'll say they are!" I had decided not to panic unless the cats did. Animals are supposed to know about earthquakes, aren't they? I don't know what our cats know; they lay asleep in various restful and decorative poses on the swaying floor and the jiggling bed, and paid no attention to anything except dinner time. I was not allowed to panic.

At four-thirty a meteorologist, explaining the height of that massive, storm-blue pillar of cloud, said charmingly, "You must understand that the mountain is very warm. Warm enough to lift the air over it to 75,000 feet."

And a reporter: "Heavy mud flow on Shoestring Glacier, with continuous lightning." I tried to imagine that scene. I went to the television, and there it was. The radio and television coverage, right through, was splendid. One forgets the joyful courage of reporters and cameramen when there is something worth reporting, a real Watergate, a real volcano.

On the 19th, I wrote down from the radio, "A helicopter picked the logger up while he was sitting on a log surrounded by a mud flow." This rescue was filmed and shown on television: the tiny figure crouch-

ing hopeless in the huge abomination of ash and mud. I don't know if this man was one of the loggers who later died in the Emanuel Hospital burn center, or if he survived. They were already beginning to talk about the "killer eruption," as if the mountain had murdered with intent. Taking it personally...Of course she killed. Or did they kill themselves? Old Harry who wouldn't leave his lodge and his whiskey and his eighteen cats at Spirit Lake, and quite right too, at eighty-three; and the young cameraman and the young geologist, both up there on the north side on the job of their lives; and the loggers who went back to work because logging was their living; and the tourists who thought a volcano is like Channel Six, if you don't like the show you turn it off, and took their RVs and their kids up past the roadblocks and the reasonable warnings and the weary county sheriffs sick of arguing: they were all there to keep the appointment. Who made the appointment?

A firefighter pilot that day said to the radio interviewer, "We do what the mountain says. It's not ready for us to go in."

On the 21st I wrote:

Last night a long, strange, glowing twilight; but no ash has yet fallen west of the mountain. Today, fine, gray, mild, dense Oregon rain. Yesterday afternoon we could see her vaguely through the glasses. Looking appallingly lessened—short, flat— That is painful. She was so beautiful. She hurled her beauty in dust clear to the Atlantic shore, she made sunsets and sunrises of it, she gave it to the western wind. I hope she erupts magma and begins to build herself again. But I guess she is still unbuilding. The Pres. of the U.S. came today to see her. I wonder if he thinks he is on her level. Of course he could destroy much more than she has destroyed if he took a mind to.

On June 4 I wrote:

Could see her through the glasses for the first time in two weeks or so. It's been dreary white weather with a couple of hours sun in the afternoons.— Not the new summit, yet; that's always in the roil of cloud/plume. But both her long lovely flanks. A good deal of new snow has fallen on her (while we had rain), and her SW face is white, black, and gray, much seamed, in unfamiliar patterns.

"As changeless as the hills—"

Part of the glory of it is being included in an event on the geologic scale. Being enlarged. "I shall lift up mine eyes unto the hills," yes: "whence cometh my help."

In all the Indian legends dug out by newspaper writers for the occasion, the mountain is female. Told in the Dick-and-Jane style considered appropriate for popular reportage of Indian myth, with all the syllables hyphenated, the stories seem even more naive and trivial than myths out of context generally do. But the theme of the mountain as woman—first ugly, then beautiful, but always a woman— is consistent. The mapmaking whites of course named the peak after a man, an Englishman who took his title, Baron St. Helens, from a town in the North Country: but the name is obstinately feminine. The Baron is forgotten, Helen remains. The whites who lived on and near the mountain called it The Lady. Called her The Lady. It seems impossible not to take her personally. In twenty years of living through a window from her I guess I have never really thought of her as "it."

She made weather, like all single peaks. She put on hats of cloud, and took them off again, and tried a different shape, and sent them all skimming off across the sky. She wore veils: around the neck, across the breast: white, silver, silver-gray, gray-blue. Her taste was impeccable. She knew the weathers that became her, and how to wear the snow.

Dr. William Hamilton of Portland State University wrote a lovely piece for the college paper about "volcano anxiety," suggesting that the silver cone of St. Helens had been in human eyes a breast, and saying:

St. Helens' real damage to us is not...that we have witnessed a denial of the trustworthiness of God (such denials are our familiar friends). It is the perfection of the mother that has been spoiled, for part of her breast has been removed. Our metaphor has had a mastectomy.

At some deep level, the eruption of Mt. St. Helens has become a new metaphor for the very opposite of stability—for that greatest of twentieth-century fears—cancer. Our uneasiness may well rest on more elusive levels than dirty windshields.

This comes far closer to home than anything else I've read about the "meaning" of the eruption, and yet for me it doesn't work. Maybe it would work better for men. The trouble is, I never saw St. Helens as a breast. Some mountains, yes: Twin Peaks in San Francisco, of course, and other round, sweet California hills—breasts, bellies, eggs, anything maternal, bounteous, yielding. But St. Helens in my eyes was never part of a woman; she is a woman. And not a mother but a sister.

These emotional perceptions and responses sound quite foolish when written out in rational prose, but the fact is that, to me, the eruption was all mixed up with the women's movement. It may be silly but there it is; along the same lines, do you know any woman who wasn't rooting for Genuine Risk to take the Triple Crown? Part of my satisfaction and exultation at each eruption was unmistakably feminist solidarity. You men think you're the only ones can make a really nasty mess? You think you got all the firepower, and God's on your side? You think you run things? Watch this, gents. Watch the Lady act like a woman.

For that's what she did. The well-behaved, quiet, pretty, serene, domestic creature peaceably yielding herself to the uses of man all of a sudden said NO. And she spat dirt and smoke and steam. She blackened half her face, in those first March days, like an angry brat. She fouled herself like a mad old harridan. She swore and belched and farted, threatened and shook and swelled, and then she spoke. They heard her voice two hundred miles away. Here I go, she said. I'm doing my thing now. Old Nobodaddy you better JUMP!

Her thing turns out to be more like childbirth than anything else, to my way of thinking. But not on our scale, not in our terms. Why should she speak in our terms or stoop to our scale? Why should she bear any birth that we can recognize? To us it is cataclysm and destruction and deformity. To her—well, for the language for it one must go to the scientists or to the poets. To the geologists, St. Helens is doing exactly what she "ought" to do—playing her part in the great pattern of events perceived by that noble discipline. Geology provides the only time-scale large enough to include the behavior of a volcano without deforming it. Geology, or poetry, which can see a mountain and a cloud as, after all, very similar phenomena. Shelley's cloud can speak for St. Helens:

> I silently laugh
> At my own cenotaph...
> And arise, and unbuild it again.

So many mornings waking I have seen her from the window before any other thing: dark against red daybreak, silvery in summer light, faint above river-valley fog. So many times I have watched her at evening, the faintest outline in mist, immense, remote, serene: the center, the central stone. A self across the air, a sister self, a stone. "The stone is at the center," I wrote in a poem about her years ago. But the poem is impertinent. All I can say is impertinent.

When I was writing the first draft of this essay in California, on July 23, she erupted again, sending her plume to 60,000 feet. Yesterday, August 7, as I was typing the words "the 'meaning' of the eruption," I checked out the study window and there it was, the towering blue cloud against the quiet northern sky—the fifth major eruption. How long may her labor be? A year, ten years, ten thousand? We cannot predict what she may or might or will do, now, or next, or for the rest of our lives, or ever. A threat: a terror: a fulfillment. This is what serenity is built on. This unmakes the metaphors. This is beyond us, and we must take it personally. This is the ground we walk on.

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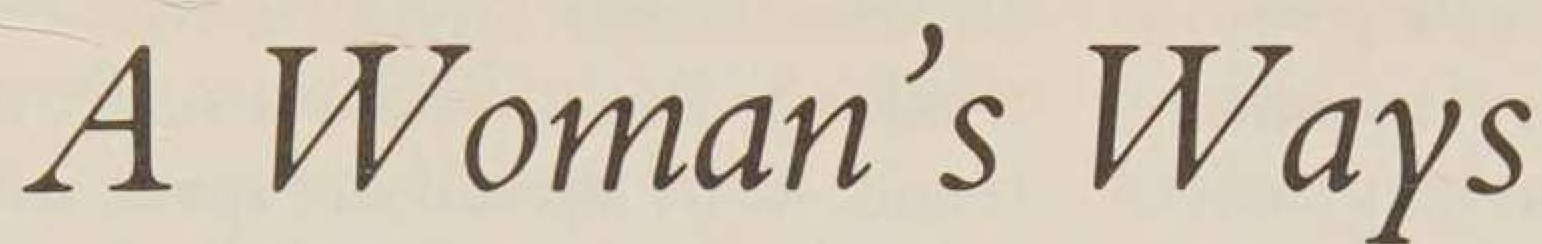


A Woman's Ways

An Interview with Judy Swamp

Judy Swamp is the wife of one of the Mohawk leaders interviewed in the last issue of PARABOLA. *To understand the unusual factors that determine the life of this unusual woman, we should return to a brief overview of the situation at Akwesasne, home of the Mohawks. There has been a continuing succession of dramatic events there, including an attack in June on the "traditional" or Longhouse encampment by the "tribal" or "elected" people backed by heavily armed New York State troopers.*

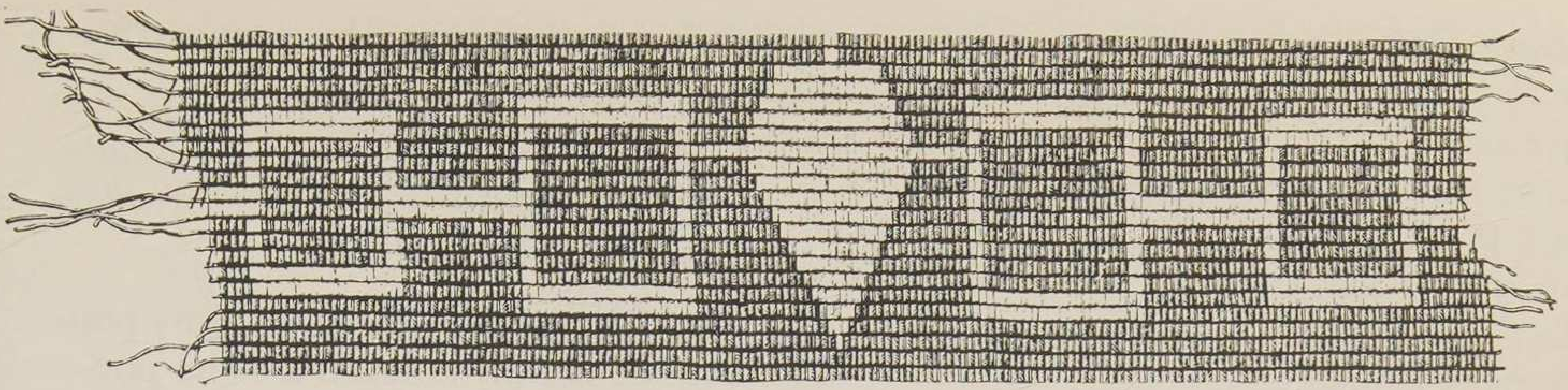
The traditional Mohawks, people of the Longhouse, see themselves as a separate nation, by treaty, under no other jurisdiction than that of their own council and their own constitution, the Great Law of Peace (dating from the fifteenth century or earlier) of the Iroquois Confederacy, of which the Mohawks are one of the original Five Nations. Their chiefs, men, are chosen and advised (and can be deposed) by certain women who have attained the position of Clan Mothers. The "elected" or "tribal" people, on the other hand, recognize and cooperate with the laws and governmental agencies of New York State and the United States, and their Tribal Council is elected, American fashion, by political processes and popular vote—a custom abhorrent to the traditional Iroquois. The two groups on the reservation are often in conflict over the values that govern their lives and their lands. The Longhouse people do not wish to impose their traditional ways on anyone else, but they want to be allowed to practice them in peace.

Perhaps the first of the above-mentioned "unusual factors" that shape Judy Swamp's life is that she and her husband returned to the Longhouse after a separation of some years, and Jake Swamp is now a Longhouse chief and a strong influence in the traditional party. Another important factor is that her home, the Mohawk reservation, straddles the St. Lawrence River near the head of the seaway, one part in New York State, one part in Canada. That river is now lined with industry—aluminum and chemical plants, paper mills and the like—and its waters are heavily polluted with fluorides, mercury, and PCBs.

Lastly, she is presently living in an encampment at Akwesasne, not in her own home. The camp was formed to support one of the Longhouse chiefs after his arrest in an incident which has brought the elected and the traditional people into serious and potentially dangerous conflict. (Information about this incident as part of the situation at Akwesasne was explored in PARABOLA*'s Obstacles issue, Vol. V. No. 3.)*

Judy's existence is informed by something which, as she says, can't always be described in English. It is something we saw, felt, and were deeply struck by, when we visited Akwesasne: perhaps "respect" is the nearest word to express the relationship that is evident there between man and woman and child and earth; something connected with a sense of the sacred in all things. The potency of this respect, and its almost total absence from our society, can only be appreciated when it is seen in operation. All around the camp people sit together in twos and threes, talking, often laughing: the young people asking older ones for comfort and advice; men consulting with women; and everyone listening to everyone else.

The women play a special and vital role. They are guardians of the home and the children, the



support and counsel of their husbands and friends; they carry the lineage of the tribe; they maintain the social and moral order. They are the caretakers of life. And the Mohawk people see themselves in general (and very specifically) as caretakers of the earth and its progeny. They are responsible, they say, for keeping this earth sacred and safe for seven generations to come. This seemingly impossible concept enters all their practical thinking and planning. For the Mohawks, it would be equally impossible to reject the evident fact that the earth is our mother, and that we and our children are part of an inescapable relationship.

As they describe it, they are all only ordinary people ("We don't hold anyone high," says Jake Swamp) whose varying qualities make them more or less suited to a particular task, whether that of chief, Clan Mother, or a member of the community. Ordinary people—with an extraordinary sense of themselves and their place and their duty on earth. We offer a talk with an extraordinary ordinary woman, Judy Swamp.

Jake and Judy Swamp

JUDY SWAMP Our ways are quite different from the ways of the white women. White people would consider us as "liberated" women. But it's not that we've been liberated. It's just that we've always had rights. We've always had an equal voice in the Council. And we have our own Women's Council.

We have talked with many different women, but they don't get the full meaning of how it is with us. There are different words that I know in Mohawk that I couldn't translate into English, and a lot of the meaning of what we are as Indian women is just lost. We have our homemaking and living—the way we are in this community. We don't just look out for our own; we have to look out for all the children. When they need help, like when they're eating, you just take the time and help them out. If a young girl or guy has problems, you sit down with them and try to sort out their feelings and get them back on the right path. And that's always been our way, not just of our Clan Mother, but of our older women. As for myself, being the wife of a chief, I'm not any higher in position; it's just that I feel at times that I have to be more outgoing when I have to meet with people. It is not a *very* heavy position. It is more like being like a mother to all of them.

PARABOLA *That's quite a job!*

J.S. People come in here, the young people and say, "Hi, Ma." It's rather funny. It doesn't embarrass me; it's just that that's who I am to them. They're mine. There are a lot of young people here that don't have their parents with them. They come to me to talk.

P. *If it weren't for the encampment, and you were living in your own house, would you still see all the young people the way you do now?*

J.S. I would, because that has been my position even before my husband took his position as a chief. That is me. I have been to a lot of other reserves, and that's always been my concern, the young. I have noticed how they go astray with liquor and drugs, and other things that go against our ways. I've always felt it was my place to try to help.

You can't treat all the young alike. You have to treat each in terms of his own ways and in terms of his own feelings. At one time I thought that you could discipline children all the same. It's not like that. Some are sensitive, and some will only get straightened out by getting a good stick after them once in a while. It's the last thing you would want to do to them, but after so many lectures you get to the point where you do have to get that twig, one that doesn't break easy, but is very skinny, and use it!

P. *How many children do you have?*

J.S. I've got seven. They are 17, 16, and 13. And there's the middle one, he's 10. Then I have like a small ladder.

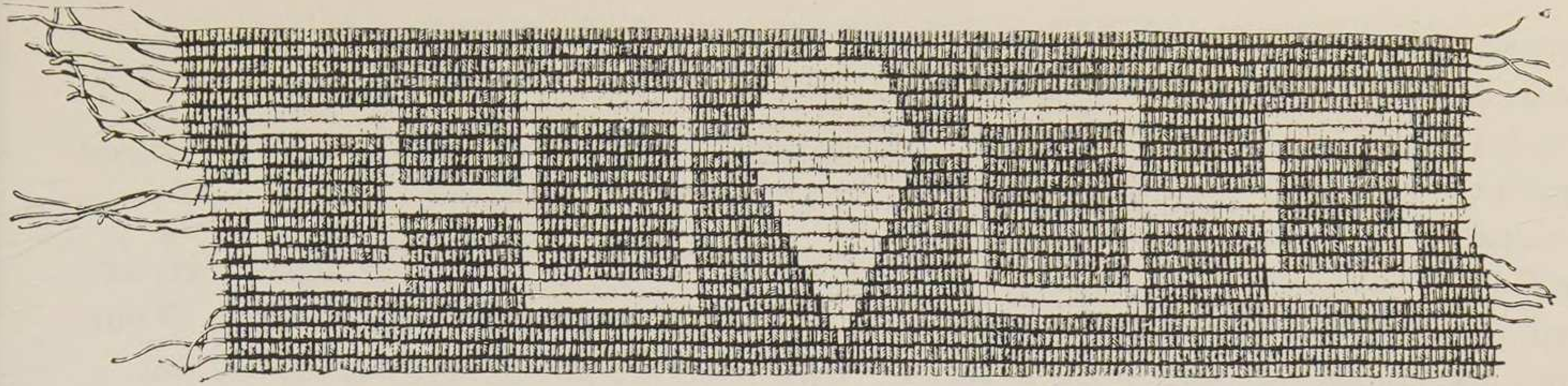
[Laughter]

It wasn't so hard bringing them up, because I found that just when I got used to not having them, I would have a new one, and start all over again.

I'll never forget that day I came home from a convention in Maine to find that things had changed in our home: I sensed Jake wanted to talk. I thought that something happened. So I was unpacking, and about one o'clock in the morning, he finally hit me with a bombshell: "I adopted three kids while you were gone."

The lineal descent of the people of the Five Nations shall run in the female line. Women shall be considered the progenitors of the Nation. They shall own the land, and the soil. Men and women shall follow the status of their mothers.

The women heirs of the chieftainship titles of the League shall be called Oianer or Otiianer (Noble) for all time to come.



If any person ever felt like packing right up and walking out that door...

[Laughter]

...and he said it as calm as anything! I couldn't argue when he said, "I have so much faith in you, that you will accept and respect my decision when I'd said I'd take them." Then what can you say?

[Laughter]

P. *He's a very smart man!*

J.S. How can you turn your back on that?

The father was white; they were left by the mother to the grandmother. When they started coming to the Longhouse, the grandmother booted them out of her house, and they were of our clan, so we took them. It worked out, I guess; the mother eventually took them back.

P. *You said something about a Women's Council. Is there a regular official council of women?*

J.S. We have a Women's Council if things need to be organized or if just too many problems arise concerning our young or the children, the small ones. All the women get together, even the very young.

P. *From what age up?*

J.S. There is really no age limit. We've had a Council where there was an eight-year-old that spoke out. It is very sad that the young look at life knowing that there is not much of a future for them. They are being sent to white schools from the time that they are three or four years old, and by the time they get out of there, when they are past high school, their interest is not where it should be. It has already gone to the point where they have to learn all over again to try to reach out. They don't know what they want; they have to learn their true identity. That is something they are not taught in school. They have language classes, culture classes, but the one thing they are not allowed is to be aware of the Great Law, which is our true form of government. The schools want them to be taught their culture, but to them that's making baskets, beadwork, and the like. The children are not told of their own history.

P. *And their own language?*

J.S. There are quite a few that know their own language. All my own children have an understanding of it.

P. *But they learn that at home, don't they, not in school?*

J.S. There are a lot that don't know it at all, and are not taught at home. It has only been lately that the awareness has come back that we should teach our young their language, and it came from the young themselves; it didn't come from the parents.

"Who am I?" is a big question today. "Who am I?" And you can't answer them.

Any member of the Five Nations, who through esteem or other feelings, wishes to adopt an individual, a family, or a number of families, may offer adoption to him or them, and if accepted, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Chiefs for confirmation and the chiefs must confirm the adoption.

It has been so long that that identity has been taken over. It is hard for them. They have to learn it for themselves before they can teach their own. It's sad; it's really sad.

I was asked one time to teach our language in one of the high schools, and I refused, because I can't even get my own children, except for the older ones, to speak it. They understand it fully, but they won't speak it. I didn't feel right being in a school trying to teach other Indian children their language when my own wouldn't even speak it.

P. *What keeps you going in the face of all this? When you say an eight-year-old stands up and asks a question you can't answer? When you say that they see no hope?*

J.S. They lose a lot of faith as they're growing up. But a big problem with the young often happens when they want to go back to the traditional way, and the parents won't allow it. They allow them a lot of other things; they are too lenient. And yet there is one thing they fight against; their own background.

I asked Jake the other night, "When our Great Law was made, did you ever think that it could be for all mankind?" All he said was, "If the Law is so great, how can it harm *any*one? How can it do damage if people go by it? The only thing is that the others can't interfere with us in our ceremonies, how we conduct *our*selves." He sees that people are human, that we're all paying for other people's mistakes. We can't be prejudiced in a way to say, "Well, you're white. Get over there!" And yet we can't live together because when we do, it gets all mixed up and there is confusion and hurting the little ones that are born out of it.

P. *Do you think that being in the encampment has made relationships stronger?*

J.S. I think in a sense, yes. It wasn't easy at first, different people, different ideas. Your own ways are not always necessarily the best. There are different ways even in cooking and sewing.

Like everybody thinks that there's only one way of cooking beans, and we found out different when we got the women together to talk about it when it came to planning meals!

P. *There isn't too much food raised on the reservation now, I suppose.*

J.S. With all the pollution in the water and the earth from the paper and aluminum plants, the people tend to keep away from it. But the young ones are coming back to it—raising their own food. Younger people have come in and tried to have what we call "nation gardens"; they have different gardens set up in different places and everybody just goes and works. It's been done for the last few years.

If we had the land, we would have more animals. We tend to shy away from raising them, not knowing whether they will live. Whole litters of pigs died, and we never connected it with the pollution. None of us even thought of bringing a vet in and having them checked out. It wasn't until the next year when the same thing happened again, when a litter of what looked like a healthy brood of nine, just all went like nothing again. When we started back up again, we see what happens: they miscarry.

P. *Is that a big worry for human mothers too?*

J.S. Yes. They say, "If this is what is happening to the animals, what of our children?" We've got one ourselves that has a skin problem, developed it one day. I mean

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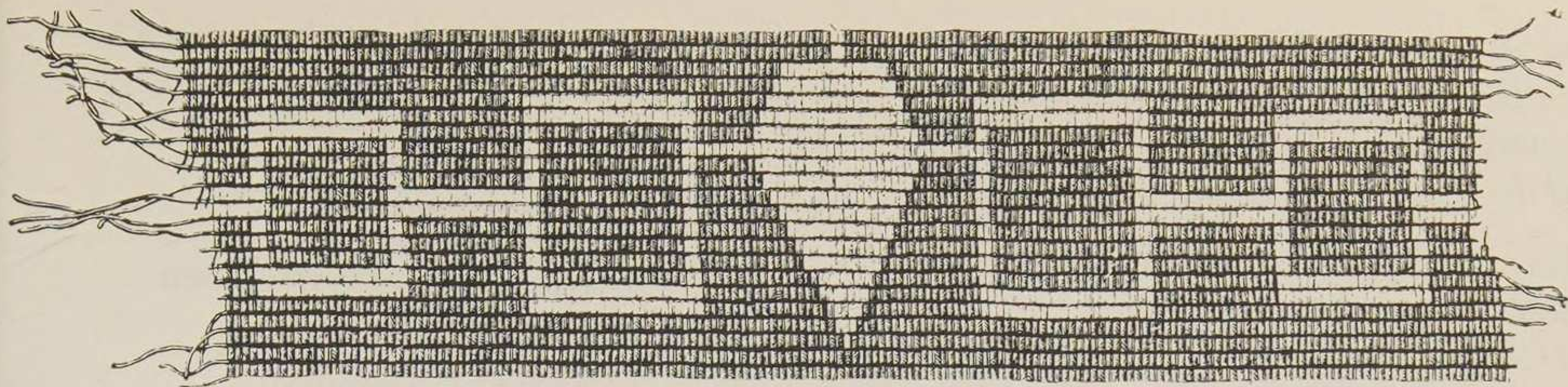
Whenever a foreign nation is conquered or has by their own will accepted the Great Peace, their own system of internal government may continue, but they must cease all warfare against other nations.



it wasn't something that came gradually; it just happened one day. And we've had a problem with it going on about three years. I treated it at first with Indian medicine, and it helped, but winter came, and we couldn't get to the plant that we were using, so I had to go back to a white doctor. I was sent to a skin specialist, and he claimed it is psoriasis.

Just yesterday, I was across the river to my mother's, and the fog from the pollution was hard to believe! I've been there almost every day this week, and I've had a sore throat every day. It goes away after a while, but it comes right back again. It's like a burning thing you have to breathe.

They are telling us it is supposed to be safe.

P. *Is it the women who have the knowledge of the plants? Or does everybody have it?*

J.S. It's not really who has it, I guess. Years back, that was something you were born with. I have one son who was always like that. He would find something, some roots and herbs, and seem to know what it was. If it's there for me to use, I know how to fix it, but as for going out and looking, that's something else. I guess that medicine is just not in me. At one time, my father used to say that that was part of getting to a certain stage when you raise your own family—what can you do for your young? What can you use to help them when they are sick?

This is another thing that we find is going. I grew up being aware of different prophecies. One of our prophecies tells that our own medicine will come to our door crying, because we tend to turn away from it. You go to any of the homes now, and if you are aware of medicines, you would find them right in the back yard. But it's not being used.

And at this time that is another thing: who wants to use something that's polluted and full of fluoride? What are we supposed to do? Where are we supposed to turn? I've had two of my boys born with teeth with a grayish color. They weren't white at all.

They don't want to admit to what they are doing. It is harming our people. But no one seems to care.

If the animal life is damaged, then the plants will be, and our children will be too. I don't know where this all will go.

You know, they say that you need the sun's rays to make things grow. I'll be teaching the oldest one something—different words to say—the moon and the sun. And that makes me think of—the time hasn't come about yet—but the prophecies say there would be a time when the cloud would just start, and there would be no sun rays to go through, and no life would be able to survive it—no plants, nothing at all. And from that no vegetation will be left, no oxygen. They're killing us! Not just the Indian people.

P. *We are all killing ourselves.*

J.S. We've tried to get land back so that we would have a base where we could do planting that would be somewhere away from here.

P. *Where would it be that would be free from this? Of course, there are some spots that are worse than others, but where is there now where there is no pollution?*

J.S. As far as I'm concerned, I watch the prophecies, and they're just fulfilling themselves. We're to the point where it's toward the end. There's something that's there: you can't touch it, you can't feel it—no, you *can* feel it. It's not just us, it's not just the Indian people.

P. *And yet you go on. We heard that a woman had gone to Six Nations Reservation to participate in the ceremonies. Is it the planting ceremony, the sun and the moon?*

J.S. Yes. Part of our ceremony here among the Mohawk people was what we call the Moon Ceremony. We had it at one time, but it was more or less lost to us. It's one thing we want to bring back.

P. *And does that have to do with planting?*

J.S. It does. You plant in the spring, and harvest in the fall. My husband found out that that's why those ceremonies are held at those times. Most of the time they try to have it either at the time that the trees start to bud or late in the fall. That's what they go by, not the month or the date.

P. *Do you hope it will have an effect, or do you see it as a celebration?*

J.S. A celebration. But I think it will, in the future, have a big effect on our people. There was something about things that just wasn't complete, but we weren't sure what it was. It has been accepted, and our young girls are really anxious to participate. They are told of the role they have from the age of puberty on; they're no longer little children.

I know how my daughters feel. Now one that's only just turned seven says, "I can hardly wait." Of course, she gets rather shy about what comes with it.

P. *And only women attend that?*

J.S. The men come to it too. They do the singing. There are different parts they have to participate in. Of course, my daughter and myself, we wanted to go real bad, and we just weren't able to participate, because at that time of the month we don't attend ceremonies. We stay by ourselves for a few days.

P. *That's always been that way?*

J.S. Yes, but it gets hard at times, even before this encampment started.

P. *You see that as a duty to fulfill, keeping to yourselves at certain times?*

J.S. Yes—even after bearing children. I have always been told that it is not up to us to break a life cycle. That's another thing that's happened today to our people. Some are getting married and saying, "I don't want to be bothered with kids."

In our wedding ceremony in the Longhouse, it's very serious, and they're told of their role. Strong words are used that you don't forget easy.

P. *Do the Longhouse people divorce at all?*

J.S. Never. When the wedding ceremony takes place, they make their pledge to the Creator and to those bearing witness to the ceremony. I don't think it's easy for any person to make promises to another and to Him and think they can turn around and break them. If a couple have trouble, it's up to the people who witnessed the marriage to try to talk to them and get them back together.

P. *If one of them commits a crime, or one of them goes mad, or something of that sort...*

J.S. It's still not allowed. Once you commit yourself, it's for life.

P. *No breaking of the bond?*

J.S. No. They have a session—I guess you could call it—that they go through even before the marriage ceremony is performed. If the Clan Mothers and chiefs see that they are not ready for it, they won't perform it. It's too bad, but if it sometimes happens that there's a breakup, it's lack of communication between the people in-

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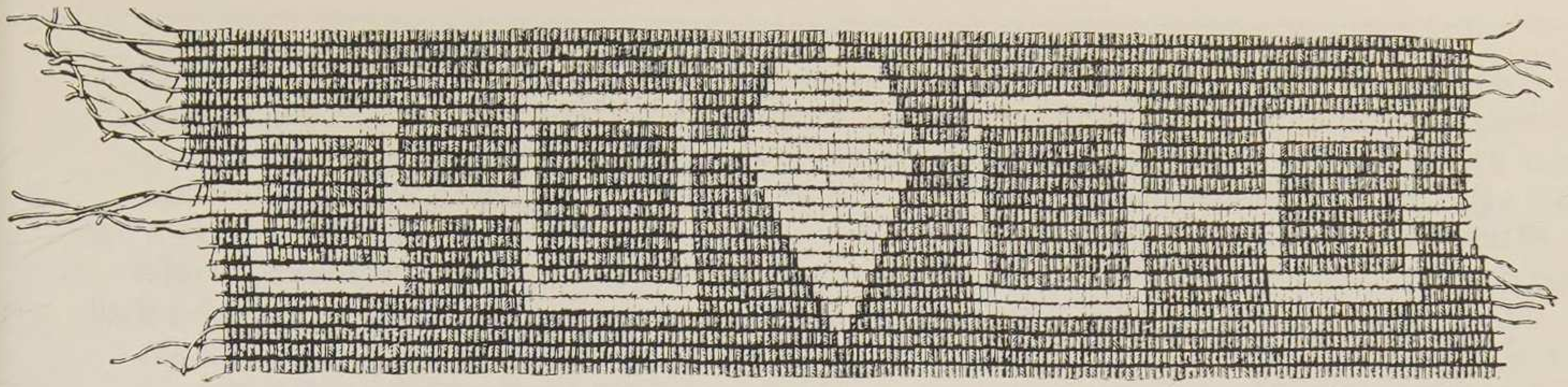
The rites and festivals of each nation shall remain undisturbed and shall continue as before, because they were given by the people of old times as useful and necessary for the good of men.



volved. And you try. You don't give up. You keep trying, even if it's for them to stay together for the children's sake. Every child needs a set of parents. It's funny too, in our way, it's usually an uncle that will talk to them. They usually respect him. The young say, "Isn't it funny that whenever he talks to us, we'd better listen." That has always been the way, within the clan, when any type of problem develops—it is up to the clan to straighten them out.

P. *How do you explain to a girl in this day and age where girls are brought up not to pay attention, really, to their cycles—how do you explain that it is their duty to be quiet at that time?*

J.S. It depends, I guess, on how much you believe in it. When you believe in something, you know its just natural for you. I find that if a mother isn't strict enough with her young, they tend to kind of jump back into something that they try to get out of.

P. *Youngsters of that age...it matters to them so terribly much what their friends do and think, and how they dress and all that. For children who are mixed with white children and other Indians who don't have the same evaluations of things, it must be really, really rough.*

J.S. I guess it is at times. It's up to each individual. That's why we feel, when people are prejudiced against us, it is not always easy to be gentle with your words. It took me a while, but I learned—you don't get through to the people by shouting at them, by telling them off. It gives you a good feeling when you know you can clear the air, and you can sit down and talk, instead of bickering about your differences.

P. *Do you have time to go to the Longhouse to the meetings?*

J.S. Yes. I found that with Jake's sitting in Council, I have to be there to understand what went on before *we* can sit down and discuss different things. Sometimes we don't see eye to eye on things, but at least I can be aware of what he decides.

P. *But he listens to you too?*

J.S. He listens to me, but he doesn't use my comments when he decides something. When he took that position as chief, one of the sort of rules that we were given was that we were not to go to him to just complain or gossip.

He says you can't tell people how to think, what to say. They have to realize for themselves when they are in the wrong. That's when it gets rough—when it comes to the feelings of people. You have to talk to people in such a way that you don't hurt their feelings. If you want to get something across, you have to know how to talk to them. Jake's known in the camp for that—a gentle man.

And they tease him about his not so gentle wife!

Well, when you have seven children, you have to deal with that, and politics, and whatever else! [Laughs]

I don't feel so gentle sometimes.

All chiefs of the League of Five Nations must be honest in all things. They must not idle nor gossip, but be men possessing those honorable qualities that make true leaders. It shall be a serious wrong for anyone to lead a chief into trivial affairs, for the people must ever hold their chiefs high in estimation out of respect to their honorable positions.

When a chieftainship title becomes vacant through death or other cause, the Otiianer women of the Clan in which the title is hereditary shall hold a council, and shall choose one of their sons to fill the office made vacant. Such a candidate shall not be the father of any chief of the League. If the choice is unanimous, the name is referred to the men relatives of the Clan. If they should disapprove, it shall be their duty to select a candidate from among their own number. If then the men and women are unable to decide which of the two candidates shall be named, then the matter shall be referred to the chiefs of the League in the Clan. They shall decide which candidate shall be named. If the men and women agree to a candidate, then his name shall be referred to the sister clans for confirmation. If the sister clans confirm the choice, they shall refer their action to the chiefs of the League who shall ratify the choice and present it to their cousin chiefs, and if the cousin chiefs confirm the name, then the candidate shall be installed by the proper ceremony for the conferring of chieftainship titles.

P. *Maybe that's why you're with him.*

J.S. My mother says there's always a balance; opposites attract.

P. *When a chief is chosen, he's chosen for life, isn't he?*

J.S. He is. When the chief accepts the position there are different things he has to be qualified for, and a lot of strong words are given to them when they are chosen. One of them is that they have to be able to decide in a way that won't hurt any future unborn generation, seven generations to come. You have to have a very good head to be able to sit in that position. At times, just within our family, the children kind of miss their father, when he has been away for quite long spells. There are things he has to do that we aren't really able to participate in. You see, he has his position, and we can't interfere in it. But they have faith; they think a lot of him. They know that he can't just work for them—he has to work for everybody else's children—even the unborn ones. I'm glad that I brought them up in a way that they do understand that.

P. *How does a woman become a Clan Mother?*

J.S. In Mohawk we do have three clans, and if we were to go about choosing a Clan Mother, it would be the people who would choose her. Somebody that they know would have the qualifications to be able to be a very strong person and be able to look after the nation.

P. *All the clans elect the Clan Mother of one clan?*

J.S. No. If we were to choose a Wolf Clan Mother, which is my clan, it would be the people who would decide, from within that clan. The same for the Turtle Clan and for the Bear Clan: they have their own big family. To be a Clan Mother, I find, is almost like a mother. You raise your children; you have to guide them—to me it's a big responsibility. I mean it's one thing to be able to more or less discipline a child; it's another to actively discipline somebody that may even be older than you. And yet, the respect is there because they know what position you have to fill. The Clan Mother has a lot of control over the young in the

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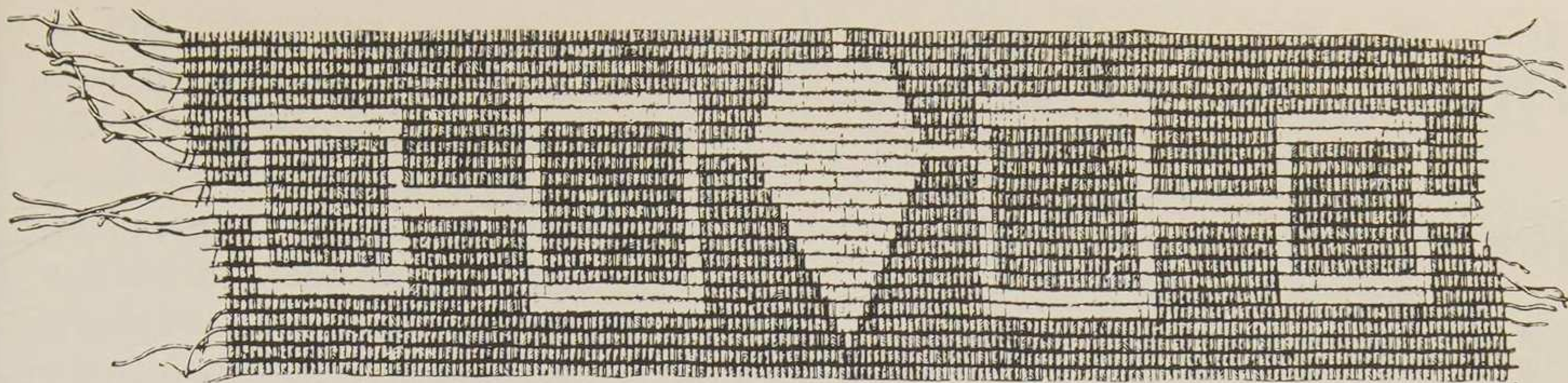
When the Otiianer women holders of a chieftainship title, select one of their sons as a candidate, they shall select one who is trustworthy, of good character, of honest disposition, one who manages his own affairs, and supports his own family, if any, and who has proven a faithful man to his Nation.

The Otiianer women, heirs of the chieftainship titles, shall, should it be necessary, correct and admonish the holders of the titles. Those only who attend the Council may do this, and those who do not shall not object to what has been said nor strive to undo the action.



way that she has to watch over her womenfolk, and if there's any problems with our young, it is mostly to her that they go for advice. She has to be a very compassionate person, and very understanding—where everybody would refer to her as their grandmother. That's the Indian way, that's how we are about our grandmother. When you have problems you can't solve, somehow the feelings are that she is wiser. You can go to her to get your answers. They don't always just give out advice; they just lay down different facts, and from there you have to use your own judgment and mind and figure things out for yourself.

P. *And they actively do reprove and advise the chiefs when they feel it's necessary?*

J.S. They do.

P. *And the chiefs come and ask them for advice when they want it? I mean, when they feel the need of advice?*

J.S. Yes.

P. *It is not the kind of relationship between men and women that is very common among us.*

J.S. When people have come here to observe, that's another thing that they felt was different. They see two people sitting there, a man and a woman, talking, just talking, discussing different things about camp, or making different plans. They say, "Well, that must be his wife sitting there discussing this." And it isn't. We all know we have to work together in order to make whatever we're doing a success.

I was always told by the older ones; keep your people together; keep them constantly alert to what goes on, and don't let them stray.

P. *Sometimes you get quite a lot from straying away, as long as you come back to your roots again…*

J.S. Yes, yes. I went to the city; I worked; then I got married. We traveled a lot after we got married, and wherever Jake's work was, that's where we were…until we came back, back into our Longhouse. And there were people that I grew up with, still there! A lot of us came back, more or less in the same situation—with families, married… And now we watch our own families come back again. ◇

Note:

Quotations in boxes throughout this article are from the Great Law of Peace of the Iroquois Confederacy—dating no later than the fifteenth century.

When a person or family belonging to the Five Nations desires to abandon their Nation and the territory of the Five Nations they shall inform the chiefs of their Nation and the Council of the League of Five Nations shall take notice of it.

When any person or any of the people of the Five Nations emigrate and reside in a distant region away from the territory of the League of Five Nations, the chiefs of the Five Nations at will may send a messenger carrying a broad belt of black shells and when the messenger arrives he shall call the people together or address them personally, displaying the belt of black shell and they shall know that this is an order for them to return to their original homes and to their Council Fires.

The Wife of Jonah

by Barbara Rohde

with relief prints by Yitzak Greenfield

You do not know my name. Nor could you guess it by looking at me. You would guess, Leah, I think, the "weary one." Or Miriam. It would not be fair to call me merely Jonah's wife (though most of you do call me Jonah's wife), for that is not a name.

I will tell you then. I am Shoshannah. "The graceful lily." You see why you would not have guessed. My thighs are heavy now, my skin no longer fair. There are moments when I feel within me a great gift that I call *grace*, but I cannot walk it now. I cannot dance it. Now and then I sing it under my breath as I am grinding the grain or bathing in the river. Jonah looks at me then in a way that reminds me that I am Shoshannah. In the river I am graceful. I try to imagine how it would be to move always as I move in the river.

When I think about that, I think I better understand what Jonah used to try to tell me about his Voice, how, when he was alone in the wilderness, far from the noise of people and the cares of dailiness, the Voice was clear within him. But when he began to walk back into the noise and dailiness, the Voice became fainter and fainter. He said the fact that he could hear it at all was what made him a prophet. But the fact the Voice grew quieter, as the voice of the singing mother when her child slips into sleep, is what made him a bumbling prophet.

"Oh, Shoshannah," he said to me once in the middle of the night, "it is a terrible thing to be a prophet, but it is a worse thing to be a half a prophet." I did not say anything because I did not have anything to say. I knew mine was not the voice he was listening for. But I held him in the dark and stroked him, and in the morning I asked him to hold Aaron for me while I made the fire, for I have learned that the weight of a small child against one's body is as soothing as honey in the throat. I saw him smile at Aaron's small hands.

Once I asked Jonah, "Why can't I hear the Voice?"

"God needs you for other things," he said. "You bring forth the sons and daughters, you keep them from the wildness, you nourish them, you comfort them. Without you, God's world would become a barren rock."

I laughed. The idea that God needed me, or even Jonah, seemed absurd. My father and my father's father had taught me that we are the ones who need Yahweh.

Jonah did not like my laughter. He scowled a little. "God has no belly, Shoshannah, to hold the little ones. God has no hands to plant the grain or to harvest. He has no tongue. That is why his word sounds in my head. You must understand, Shoshannah—we are the belly and the tongue."

I do not know whether it was what he said, or the way he said it, his voice soft but

very firm, but I felt a sudden cool clarity, the way one does when one is alone in the desert at night and sees a star fall. I saw Jonah in a new way, a strange way. It was for a moment hard to remember that this was the man who lay with me at night, whose back I had washed in the river, whose own water I had seen arc from his body to the hot sand. I remembered the time as a child when I had stood in our village while the drummers sat beating their drums and suddenly the sound was not coming from the drums but seemed to be sounding in my whole body.

Jonah's words sounded through me like that long ago drum-beat and deep within me I felt an answering "yes." In that moment I believed that Jonah was God's tongue.

But later, after one of those long times when Jonah was with me but was not really with me, when he sat brooding for hours at a time and never looked at me but seemed to be looking at something far beyond me, when he did not smile at Aaron's new words, nor at the food I placed before him, nor at my own body, when he did not notice my moments of great tiredness at the end of the day and let me struggle alone with the waterjugs and the animals—it was then I asked the question I never should have asked. Later I came to understand that the question I asked so innocently was the same terrible question that had haunted Jonah from the first moment he had heard his Voice.

"How do you know that it is the voice of God?"

When I asked that question, he heard me. He looked at me, truly seeing me. "I know the same way you know that the tiny movement within your belly is a child that will on a particular day be forced from your body and be cut from you forever and grow and become a man."

I thought about that. I thought I understood. But then I could not be sure I truly understood. I remembered the woman in the next village whose belly had grown as mine had grown with Aaron, who sang as I had sung with the joy of the child that was to come. And then she had fallen in death, and the people said it had not been a child within her but a sickness, that she had been walking through her days with death growing within her, not life. That was a terrible thing that made me shudder. I remembered it and wanted to ask Jonah about it, but I did not. I kept it in my own head where most of the time it lay asleep, but sometimes it awoke with me in the middle of the night and urged me to ask that question that never came out in the sunlight, "Is Jonah a prophet or is he mad?"

But what you want to know about is the story of Jonah and the fish—that silly story that people keep telling over and over again and seem to want to believe.

It began this way. Jonah could not sleep well when he came back from one of his long journeys into the wilderness. He lay awake most of the night and only toward morning did sleep finally seize him, and then he slept late into the day, and I had to struggle to shade his eyes from the light and to keep Aaron from running to him.

"What is wrong with you, Jonah?" I would ask, but he told me nothing. He groaned sometimes, unaware, I think that he had done so. He lay staring into the dark. He spent long hours at prayer, but when he rose from his knees, there was no peace in him. He paced back and forth beside the fire and spat into it so that the flames shifted. Finally, after days of this, he took my hands in both of his and spoke with a kind of agony. "I must go to Nineveh."

I could not believe what he was saying. Nineveh is a city far to the north of us, a great city, the capital of the Assyrian empire. We had heard tales of its great size but more of its great wickedness. I felt fear enter me. Nineveh would not open its arms in welcome to the son of Ammitai.

"Why must you go to Nineveh, Jonah?"

"I must warn them of God's anger. I must ask them to repent."

Jonah spoke with strength, but I knew it was not a strength that came from the depth of him, but one he had put on like a splint on a weak leg. I knew he was as afraid as I was.

"Are you afraid, Jonah?" I asked. I have learned one becomes stronger as one faces one's weakness.

"I am afraid, Shoshannah. They will not listen to my preaching, or if they listen, they will laugh, or if they do not laugh, their anger will seize them. They will curse me or stone me. They may put me to death in their anger."

Jonah's fear and my fear huddled together in the silence for a while. I knew the only way to end my fear was to end Jonah's fear but how could I do that?

"And will God not protect you from your enemies?" I asked.

Jonah looked at me strangely. I knew he had been thinking about this question. He spoke quietly then. "But, Shoshannah, what if it is only the sight of my mangled body that will bring them to repentance? What if I must be a sacrificial lamb?"

We stood in the silence again, our hands still clasped. Then he pulled his hands away angrily and turned his back and cried out in a kind of defiant pain, "No, I will not go."

A blackness was in him, as if the death he feared in Nineveh had found him out here. His eyes grew empty. He sat for long hours saying nothing, not even moving. I tried to bring him into the light again. I offered him fruit. I sang his favorite songs very softly while I was at my work. I asked Aaron to show him the small flower he had found blooming beside the wall. But the fruit withered before Jonah ate, and the songs caught in my throat and sounded even to me like the mourner's lament and Aaron became shy, afraid of Jonah's blackness and the heaviness of the silence.

Finally one morning I felt his hand on my shoulder, and I roused from my sleep and saw that he had prepared for a journey. I did not beg him to stay. I did not even ask where he was going. I thought it was to Nineveh. I kissed him and waited until he was out of sight to let my tears fall.

Now I must tell you of the day that Jonah returned. There were many who told me that Jonah would never return. Some said that they had heard he had been put to death in Nineveh, others that he had been seen at the docks of Joppa setting sail in a great ship going to the edges of the world. There were those who claimed that ship had gone down in a storm. Still I believed he would return.

Each morning when I awoke, I believed it would be the day of his return. Each evening I would say, "Maybe tomorrow." And then one day it was the day. I looked up from mixing the bread and I saw a speck in the distance growing larger and larger, and soon I could tell that it was he. I did not even wipe my hands. I ran toward him, laughing and crying at the same time, not even heeding Aaron's calling after me as he ran far behind. And we met, Jonah and I, and then we stepped apart and stared at each other, trying to read in each other's faces what had happened since last we were together.

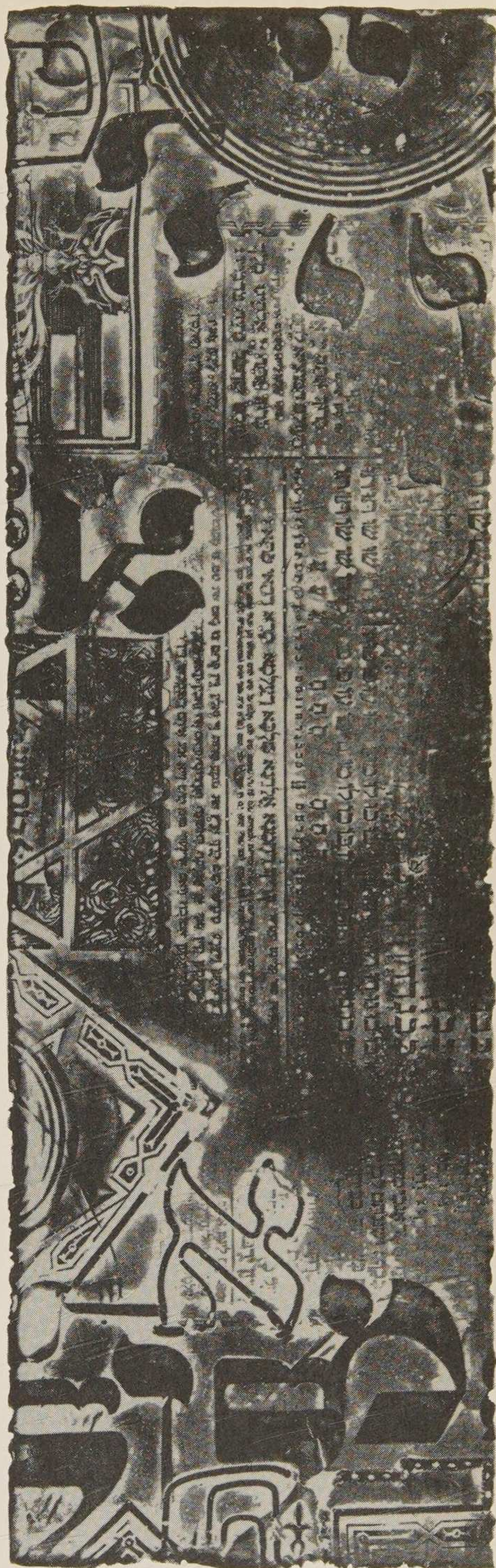
I knew the blackness had gone out of Jonah. His eyes were filled with love, though I do not think it was love only for me. I had the sense his eyes would have held love for whatever they looked upon at that moment. He looked older, somehow, and seemed at once both stronger and more gentle, the way a woman does after she has brought forth her firstborn—full of a deep knowledge of the marriage of pain and joy. We walked back together and when we met Aaron, Jonah lifted him onto his shoulders, and Aaron shrieked with delight and held onto Jonah's hair as if it were the mane of an animal and my heart was full of thanksgiving.

We lay awake late into the night while Jonah told me his story. I will try to remember his words to me and tell you, for they are very different from the story you have heard, about the fish.

"When I left you, Shoshannah, it was as if I were fleeing from myself, or from the eye of God. That was the madness in me. I had told myself that it was not God's voice sending me to Nineveh, but at the same time I knew it was God's voice. I thought if I sailed far away, far from our own country, as far as Tarshish, which is the edge of our world, and then beyond Tarshish, into the unknown waters, then the Voice could not follow me, nor God's eye see me, and I would find peace.

"So I walked to Joppa and went from ship to ship, looking for one setting sail for Tarshish that would take me aboard, and finally I found one and we sailed toward the place where the sun disappears. They were strange men on that ship, men who did not know our God at all but spoke of other gods who seemed like silly little men. When we sailed into a storm, they said their gods were angry and the only way to appease them was to throw the sailor into the sea who had offended the gods. They did not consider why the gods were offended nor try to discover what the offense might be with the skills of their own minds. They decided to draw lots to see which of them should be cast overboard.

"You may find this hard to believe, Shoshannah, for even now I find it hard to believe about myself, but in that moment I wanted to die. There was an emptiness within me as if someone had taken a knife and carved a great hole from my very center and the pain was so terrible I would do anything to end it, even if it meant ending my life. So I asked the sailors to throw me into the sea.



"They were afraid to do that—to follow *my* word rather than the word of Fate, but I told them I knew I had offended my God and surely it was my God that had sent the storm, and finally they did as I asked. There were two who seized my arms, and two my feet, and they swung me and threw me from the ship and I fell into the blackness of the water from which I thought I never would arise again.

"There was no fish, Shoshannah, no fish that swallowed me. Somehow, in a daze, I clung to a log and was washed ashore, far from any village. I was bruised and cut and out of my mind, and I lay on the shore for a very long time, still in the depths of despair. The God that I had sought to escape was right there, within me.

"It is strange how when one seeks death and does not find it, the pain of life becomes even more unbearable. And I felt a great guilt for my longing toward death, the death of my body, the death of my spirit. Something deep within me knew that in hiding from God's judgment I hid also from his love, and that was the terrible emptiness I felt in my belly.

"But finally, I begged God to look at me. I felt I was so far in the depth I could sink no lower, so instead of hiding any longer, I begged God to *see* me—frail man—beaten, confused, corrupted, abandoned, lost—and in that moment I had the sense that God came into the depths of my Hell and whispered in my ear.

"I heard the sound of my own heart beating—the heartbeat of life. I turned over on the sand and looked up toward the blinding sun. I closed my eyes against its power but at the same time let its power caress me and heal me. I looked toward the sea, which seemed so gentle now, tender as a mother. The waves lapped at the shore. I walked down and bathed myself in those waters, and then I started walking along the edge of the sea until I found a small village. I must have looked very strange, my clothes in shreds, my body bruised. 'You must have come from the bottom of the sea,' the people said. 'Or the belly of a whale,' I said, laughing at my own inventiveness. Perhaps they believed me. Then I found the small ship that brought me back to Joppa and to you."

We lived simply and contentedly for a time, everything filled with a quiet joy. The simple acts of eating and bathing and singing to Aaron and lying down together at the end of a day of work had a kind of gleam to them. Jonah no longer seemed tormented nor troubled. His heart was not divided.

Still the story that he had been swallowed by a fish persisted. At first he tried to correct the story. "No," he would say, "I was not in the belly of a whale for three days. I was not vomited out upon the shore. I don't know where you got that idea." But the more he denied the story, the more it seemed to spread. Finally, he just gave up. "What does it matter?" he asked me. I think he enjoyed the fame a little, the way people looked at him when he walked in the market. There had been a miracle and Jonah had been at the center of it.

Perhaps it was partly the persistence of that tale that caused the change in him. I began to notice it after he had been home for a while. It is hard to describe exactly, but I had the sense that he was beginning to turn things upside down.

What became important to him was not that he had heard God's voice but that *he* had heard God's voice. For some reason he began to think that God had chosen him not because God needed a man to be his messenger upon the earth but because he, Jonah, was so great in God's eyes—so eloquent, so strong, so faithful.

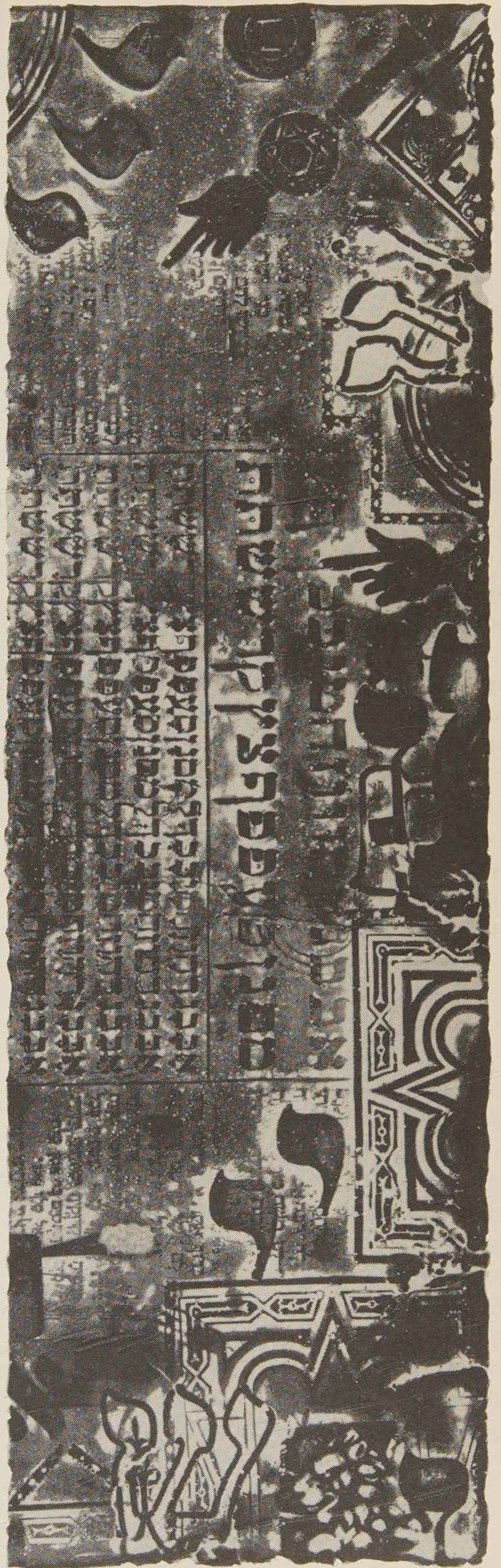
A strange arrogance came over him and often I found I was angry. Even the way Jonah was with me had changed. Where once I had thought of myself as God's servant who had been called to help Jonah protect his gifts of prophecy, now Jonah made me feel like Jonah's servant. It fright-

ened me as well as angered me because I feared that Jonah's head would become so filled with the sound of his own words that he would no longer be able to hear his Voice.

When Jonah told me that he had decided that he would go to Nineveh, that this time he would truly go, that he would dare the wrath of the people, that he would rebuke them for their dreadful wickedness and warn them of the punishment of the Just One, I was frightened by his fervor. I did not say much, but I tried to remind him of how he had felt, lying in the sun on the shore of the sea after he had been thrown from the ship. I tried to recall to him the serenity of God's love. He did not want to remember. He was too filled with his sense of mission. He had reached that place where he could no longer tell the difference between righteousness and self-righteousness.

And yet the long solitary journey that he took to Nineveh must have opened him a little. By the time he reached Nineveh, I suspect he spoke with a double voice—his own voice, the voice of the small and arrogant man, but deep within that voice another Voice, the Voice that held the truth of God. If that had not been so, the Ninevites would never have turned their faces in a new direction. If all they had heard had been the words of a little self-satisfied man, fat with the sense of his own importance, they could have laughed them off, or ignored them with a defensive outrage. There must have been something in what Jonah had to say or in the way that he said it that made them lie awake at night and wonder, and when they arose in the morning, made them see each other and themselves in a new way.

Never before had such a thing happened—a whole city felt the foolishness of its past. I wish I had been there to talk to those



people. It is hard for me to imagine what it had been like. Yet, I suppose if the king himself takes off his rich robes and dresses as simply as a herdsman, if the king himself laughs at all the absurd past pretensions of his reign, the emptiness of his longing for power, then it is easier for the people. Jonah prophesied that Nineveh would be destroyed in forty days. At the end of forty days, Nineveh was still there, but it was a different Nineveh.

I thought Jonah would come home rejoicing, but he came home angry with an anger that turned into despair. He sat in silence, not showing any life in his eyes. It all seemed very strange to me.

"What is wrong with you, Jonah?" I would ask, but he only stared at the earth and said nothing.

The temptation for me was to become angry myself, or to withdraw so that I would not have to feel the pain of that silence. But I sat with him in his blackness and tried to understand what had happened to him in Nineveh. When Aaron was asleep, I would go off by myself and stare at the patterns of the clouds or the patterns in the sand, and little by little I began to think things I had not thought before.

Finally I went to Jonah. I sat down before him and looked into his face.

"You are a prophet, Jonah," I said, "not a fortune-teller."

I saw his face turning red. I knew anger toward me was rising within him. He was not used to hearing the voice of Shoshannah commenting upon his work.

Still, I continued. While I had been staring at the sand and skies, I had remembered the day Aaron was born, how hard it had been to let go of my Self long enough to get the task done, how long it had taken me to learn to ride with the pain rather than to try to control it. And I remembered that other thing, that sense of how something had used me to bring forth this child. At the moment of his cry I had shouted exultantly, "I've done it," and for a moment felt a strong pride, but then, in an instant, my attention was upon Aaron and my pride was for Aaron, our son.

I tried to speak all this to Jonah, though it was difficult to speak these things, to find the words and the courage. His anger made his eyes look hard and made the skin around his lips turn white.

"Don't you remember, Jonah, how much joy we felt when all the people came to see our son? We did not want them to look at us. We did not want praise for my labor. We wanted them to see the beauty of Aaron, to joy with us in our joy. Don't you remember, Jonah?"

Jonah lifted his hand and for a moment I thought he would strike me, but instead he held his hand in the air for a long time and finally touched my cheek with it, very gently, and started to laugh.

"Oh, Shoshannah," he said. "Oh, Shoshannah. My graceful lily."

Even now, there are times when Jonah and I are in the market square and we see one person nudge another and whisper and we know they are saying, "There is Jonah, the one who was swallowed by the fish." Jonah has stopped trying to deny or to explain.

"Let them have their miracles," he says. In his older years he has become much mellower. I am the one who wants to remind them of the real miracles—of our son, Aaron, and of our daughter, Rebecca, and of Aaron's son, but most of all of the miracle of Nineveh, the city that for some reason had ears to hear and overnight regained its sanity.

"It never happened before," I say. "It may never happen again."

"It will happen again," Jonah says. "Everything is possible. Meanwhile people would rather hear stories of fish swallowing men and vomiting them up again than stories of men learning to love."

I suppose Jonah is right. Still, I have never liked the story of Jonah and that fish. That is the reason I am telling you the story of Jonah's wife. ◇

Martha and Mary
Second Discourse
by Meister Eckhart

Intravit Iesus in quoddam castellum et mulier quaedam Martha nomine, excepit illum in domum suam.
St. Luke x. 38

T. LUKE wrote in his Gospel: "Our Lord went up into a citadel." There he was received by a woman called Martha. She had a sister called Mary who sat herself down at the feet of our Lord and listened attentively to his word. Martha however busied herself with serving the Lord. Three things constrained Mary to sit at the feet of our Lord. The first was this: that her soul was filled with the goodness of God. The second was a great inexpressible longing for she knew not what, and she was filled with a wish, not knowing for what she wished. The third was the eternal word which flowed from Christ and from which she drew strength and delight.

There were also three things which impelled Martha to busy herself in the service of Jesus. Firstly, she had reached maturity and the ground of her being had been wholly prepared. Therefore she believed that she was fitted to busy herself in this way. Secondly, her depth of perception guided her to carry out her actions in the right way, as directed by her love. Thirdly, she recognized the high dignity of her guest.

The masters say that God is available to each man, both spiritually and corporeally, according to his desires.

One can discern that the Lord fulfills the spiritual and corporeal need of those who cleave to him. There are those who are satisfied through the senses and receive a certain quality of consolation, delight, and satisfaction from God. But this does not fulfill the need for those who cleave to God, whose satisfaction is through the spirit. I speak now of the necessity to nourish the pinnacle of the soul, so that it is not degraded by complacency, but stands above it. Man can only find his spiritual home where the love and suffering of the creature cannot touch this pinnacle. I call "creature" all that one perceives below the divine level.

Now Martha said: "Lord, bid her help me." She was not complaining, but she was impelled to speak from goodwill or kindly persuasion. How does this come about? Well, pay attention. Martha saw that Mary's soul was overwhelmed by her indulgence in a feeling of well-being. Martha knew Mary better than Mary knew Martha, because for a long time Martha's life had been passed in right actions. Higher knowledge is bestowed upon such a life. Such a life discriminates between the world of desire and the world which is illuminated by the spirit, and so can touch the light of Eternity, and which one can reach in this life below God. The light of Eternity enables us to know ourselves and God. We cannot know ourselves without God. If you are aware only of yourself, you perceive only opposites.

The whole question becomes clear in the testimony of St. Paul on the one hand, and the heathen Masters on the other. In ecstasy St. Paul saw God, and himself in God in a spiritual way; but he could not discern any particular virtue because he lacked training in such disciplines. But the heathen Masters had reached such high understanding through the practice of these disciplines that they could recognize all virtues with more insight than St. Paul or any other saint in his first ecstasy.

So it was with Martha. And that is why she said: "Lord, bid her help me," as if she wished to say to him: "It seems to my sister

that she can do as she wishes so long as she remains under the influence of your protection. Let her test this truth by bidding her get up and leave you.'' Martha spoke with compassion after much pondering. Mary was filled with longing, not knowing what it was that she desired. We suspect that Mary sat there more for the sake of her feeling of well-being than for the sake of her spiritual gain. So Martha said: ''Lord, bid her rise,'' because she feared that Mary would become fixed in this feeling of well-being and would remain there. Then Jesus answered her saying: ''Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things. But one thing is needful, and Mary has chosen that good part which shall not be taken away from her.'' Jesus spoke to Martha, not to admonish her, but to console her and to shew her that Mary could become as Martha wished.

UT WHY did Jesus say: ''Martha, Martha,'' and call her twice by that name? Isidorus said that it must not be doubted that, before the time Christ became man, no man whom God called by name was ever lost. The fate of those whom he had not called by name was in doubt. I call the ''pronouncing of the name'' by Christ his eternal knowledge, which existed unchangeably in Eternity in the living Book called ''Father-Son-Holy Spirit,'' before the creation of all creatures. No man, who is named in this book and whose name has beeen pronounced by Christ, has ever been lost. Moses, to whom God said: ''I know thee by name,'' bears witness to this. So also when Jesus said to Nathaneal: ''I saw thee under the fig tree.'' The fig tree symbolizes a quality which God himself does not deny and the name of which has been there with God from Eternity. So it is proven that no man was or ever will be lost whom Jesus, being Christ in his human form, called by name from the eternal Word.

But why did Jesus call Martha by name twice? In this way he showed that Martha possessed wholly all that a creature should possess of temporal and eternal possessions. The first ''Martha'' signified the completeness of her temporal actions. The second ''Martha'' signified that she lacked nothing of what was required for eternal bliss. That is why he said: ''Martha, Martha, thou are careful...'' by which he meant: Things stand close by thee, but not within thee. Those who are imprisoned in their daily actions remain troubled. But those who carry out all their works according to the law of eternal light are free. A skilled craftsman works from understanding and care within himself, otherwise the work is performed externally. Such a person stands very close to the circumference of Eternity, though not inside it. I say ''very close'' because no creature can approach Eternity save through an image. For this there are two methods.

There is one which is in time and without which I am unable to attain unto God. It is practical skill used in a way that does not become an obstacle to the path of eternal bliss. The other is that the practical skill which we have is not to be taken to ourselves. It is for this reason that we have been placed in time, so that we may become nearer to God and more like Him through practical skills enlightened by intellect. This is what St. Paul meant when he said: ''Redeem the time for the days are evil.'' ''To redeem the time'' means that through intellect there lies the ever-present opportunity to rise toward God, not by varying kinds of imaginations, but by enlightened intellect full of light and truth. And ''the days are evil'' understand in this way: ''day'' implies ''night,'' because if there were no night there would be no day, and if one were not to differentiate between them, all would be one light. And this is what Paul meant: a life of light is of little account if the darkness overshadows it, veiling the sublime spirits and eternal bliss. This was also the meaning of Jesus when he said ''Walk while ye have the light.'' Because he whose actions are in the

light ascends to God, free and unencumbered by any image. His light is his "practical skill" and his "practical skill" is his light.

THIS IS just as it was with the beloved Martha. That is why Jesus said: "But one thing is needful..." One, not two. I and thou. When surrounded by eternal light, they are one. The "Two-One" is a burning spirit which stands above all else and yet is below God, on the circumference of Eternity. Whosoever cannot see God directly is Two. His recognition and his being, or his recognition and his image of his being, never become One in him. Only where God is seen by the spirit, entirely without image, does one see God. There One becomes Two, and Two is One, Light and Spirit, a unity enveloped in eternal Light.

Now, pay attention as to what the "circumference of Eternity" is. There are three ways for the soul to come to God. The first is: to seek resolutely for God in all creatures by many skillful means. This is the meaning when King David said: "In all things I have searched for *peace*."

The second is: a way which is undefined, free, and yet with limits, where one is without preconception and images, above oneself and separate from the existence of materiality. This is the way that Jesus alluded to when he said: "Blessed are thou, Simon Peter, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee when thou callest me God, but my Father which is in heaven." St. Peter did not see God unveiled, even though he was raised above the world of the senses through the power of the heavenly Father, as far as the circumference of Eternity. I say: He was encompassed by the divine power of the heavenly Father, gazing upward in a tumult of wonder. Free from the desire of the senses, he heard the simple truth of the unity of God-Man in the person of the divine Father-Son as a creaturelike sound from above. I make bold to say that if St. Peter had perceived God directly in his true nature, as he did later, and as St. Paul did when his ecstasy took him to the third heaven, then the language of the highest angel would have seemed uncouth to him. Then he spoke many words which were not required of him by Jesus, for Jesus sees into the ground of the heart and spirit of him who stands directly before God in perfect freedom. This is what St. Paul meant when he said: "I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." From this you can recognize that St. Peter stood at the circumference of Eternity, not yet seeing the unity of God within his own being.

The third way, although called way is however "being within oneself": to see God directly within one's own being. Now Christ said: "I am Way and Truth and Life." One Christ in the Person, one Christ in the Father, one Christ in the Spirit, these three, Way and Truth and Life, One as Jesus in whom all these are. Apart from this, all belongs to creature and image. God brings the light of His Word in this third way and it is filled with the Holy Spirit: this surpasses everything that can be understood in words.

Hearken to this miracle. Miraculous indeed! Being outside, we are yet inside: understanding, we are understood: seeing, we are that which is seen: holding, we are held: where the spirit abides in peace, united to eternity, that is the goal.

Now we shall return to our discourse of how Martha and, with her, all who seek God stand "beside care and worry" but not "within care and worry." The quality of this action in time is on the same level as a direct connection to God, because it brings a man as near to him as is possible for a man to attain, except only for those who have direct perception of God. That is why Jesus said to Martha: "You stand 'beside' events and 'beside' cares." And by that he meant that her lower energies exposed her to dis-

tress and anxiety, because she had not indulged herself in the delights of the spirit, but she stood "beside" events and not "within" them.

HREE conditions are essential to our actions. They are: that one acts seriously and with understanding and after due reflection. I call "seriously" that which corresponds to one's highest capacity. But I call "with understanding" that which at the moment is beyond one's capacity. Finally, I call "reflection" that which one experiences of living reality in right actions. When these three conditions are fulfilled one is truly brought near to God, as Mary Magdalene was brought to ecstasy in the midst of her desolation.

Now Jesus said: "Thou art troubled about many things, but not the one." When an image comes between the direct perception of a pure soul which is turned toward the circumference of Eternity, then that soul becomes "troubled," and is prevented from remaining there. Such a being becoming troubled is taken into sorrow and grief. Martha however stood untroubled, mature, upright, and free. Therefore she wished the same state for her sister, for she perceived that fundamentally Mary was not yet standing there. The wish that Mary should also reach this place, which belongs to eternal bliss, came from the mature ground of Martha's soul. That is why Jesus said: "One thing is needful."

What is the One? It is God. All creatures have need of it. If God withdraws Himself, all creatures are as nothing. If God withdraws Himself from the soul of Jesus, where the Spirit is united with the divine person, then Jesus is left only as a creature. This is why the One is so necessary to man.

Martha feared that her sister would remain bound in her feeling of well-being and contentment, and she wished that Mary should become like herself. That is why Jesus spoke thus: "Be not troubled, Martha, for she hath chosen the best part. This will become one with her. To her will be apportioned the highest that can be given to any creature. She will attain the same state of bliss that has been given to you!"

Now, let me instruct you about the virtues! A virtuous life depends upon three conditions which concern the will: to surrender one's will to God: to receive the cognition that follows this surrender: to follow God wholly and completely by whatever action is required. There are three kinds of will. The first is the will of the senses, the second is the will enlightened by reason, and the third is the eternal will.

The will of the senses has need for instruction to enable one to hear true teachers.

The will enlightened by reason consists in this: that one follows the path of Christ and the saints. This means that one carries out in equal measure instruction, conduct, and skill directed toward the highest.

When all this is fulfilled, then God implants something further into the ground of the soul: that is an eternal will together with the beneficent command from the Holy Spirit. Then speaks the soul: "Lord, invest me with your eternal will!" When the soul has come to this state, God is well pleased, and the Father places his eternal Word into the soul.

When honest and upright men say: "Now we have to become whole men so that we are neither moved nor touched by pleasure or sorrow," they are wrong. For I say that there has never been a saint so great that pleasure and sorrow have not affected him. As against this I say: The lot of the saint in this life is such that nothing can divert him from God. Do you really believe that you are incomplete as long as words can move you to pleasure and pain? This is not so! For this did not even apply to Jesus. He allowed us to see this when he said: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." If one creature were able to suffer all the sufferings of the world, this suffering would be less than that of Jesus when he uttered these words. His suffering was so intense because of the holy union of the divine and human natures in him.

Therefore I say: No saint has ever existed or will exist who has not experienced

pain and pleasure. Now and again, due to the love, mercy, and miracle of God, it happens that if someone, whom you could reproach for his lack of faith or his imperfections, received the plentitude of God's grace, then he would stand poised between pain and pleasure. And again, a saint can reach a state where nothing can separate him from God, even though his heart is tormented, and he is not in a state of grace. His will however remains at one with God, and he says: "Lord, I am yours and you are mine." In such a man nothing can happen to hinder his eternal bliss, even though this bliss does not reach the crown of the spirit, in the place where the spirit stands united with God's highest will.

HEN Jesus said: "Thou art troubled about many things." Martha's essential being was such that her activities in many matters did not hinder her, but rather these guided her toward eternal bliss. She did not experience this bliss directly, but by means of her noble nature and constant efforts and virtue she was much helped toward it. Mary was at first this kind of Martha, before she could become the mature Mary. For in the days when she sat at the feet of the Lord, she was not yet the true Mary; although she was named Mary, she had not yet reached the true Mary in her being. This was because she still sat in a sweet feeling of well-being and was taken into the school of *learning* to live. But Martha already stood wholly there as a complete being. Therefore she said: "Lord, bid her arise," as if she wished to say: "Lord, I would prefer that she did not sit there in a feeling of well-being. I wish that she would learn to live so that she brings life into her being. Bid her arise so that she may become whole." She was not named Mary when she sat at the feet of Jesus. Rather, I call "Mary" a well-trained body that is obedient to a wise teaching. I call "obedient" that situation when the will is content with what insight demands.

There are ordinary people of good being who believe that they can exist in a state where material things no longer have any meaning for them. But this is not possible. I myself shall never reach a state where a painful sound is as pleasant to my ear as the sweet sound of a lyre. When the insight becomes aware of the painful sound, then it is able to command the will of the senses to disregard this, and this insight then says: "It is pleasurable to me!" See, this struggle becomes pleasurable; for what a man has to fight for with great effort becomes a pleasure of the heart. Only then does it become fruitful.

Certain people desire to be rid of actions. I say: That cannot be! After the moment when the disciples received the Holy Spirit, it was only then that they began to perform right actions. Therefore when Mary sat at the feet of the Lord, she was still learning, because she had been taken into the school of life and was learning to live. Later, after Christ had risen toward heaven, and she had received the Holy Spirit, only then did she begin to serve. Only then could she travel across the seas to preach and become a servant of the disciples. Only in beginning to perform right actions do these saints acquire sainthood, only then can they gather treasure for eternal bliss. Before they had reached this state all their actions could only atone for guilt and avert punishment. For this Jesus Christ is witness. For from the beginning when God became man and man became God, he labored for our salvation and died on the cross. There was no member of his body that had not performed right action.

May we truly follow him in the practice of
right action as sincerely as we can.
To that may God help us.
Amen.

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The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis

Joseph Campbell on the Great Goddess

Many of the difficulties that women face today follow from the fact that they are moving into a field of action in the world that was formerly reserved for the male and for which there are no female mythological models. The woman finds herself, consequently, in a competitive relationship with the male, and in this may lose the sense of her own nature. She *is* something in her own right, and traditionally (for some four million years) the relationship of that something to the male has been experienced and represented, not as directly competitive, but as cooperative in the shared ordeal of continuing and supporting life. Her biologically assigned role was to give birth to and to rear children. The male role was to support and protect. Both roles are biologically and psychologically archetypical. But what has happened now—as a result of the masculine invention of the vacuum cleaner—is that women have been relieved in some measure, of their traditional bondage to the household. They are moving into the field and jungle of individual quest, achievement, and self-realization, for which there are no *female* models. Moreover, in pursuing their distinct careers they

are emerging progressively as differentiated personalities, leaving behind the old archetypal accent on the biological role—to which, however, their psyches are still constitutionally bound. The grim prayer of Lady Macbeth before her deed, "unsex me here!" must be the unspoken, deeply felt cry of many a new contender in this masculine jungle.

But, on the other hand, there is no such need. The challenge of the moment—and there are many who are meeting it, accepting it and responding, not in the way of men, but of women: the challenge is to flower as individuals, neither as biological archetypes, nor as personalities imitative of the male. And, to repeat once more, there are no models in our mythology for an individual woman's quest. Nor is there any model for the male in marriage to an individuated female. We are in this thing together and have to work it out together, not with passion (which is always archetypal) but *com*passion, in patient fosterage of each other's growth.

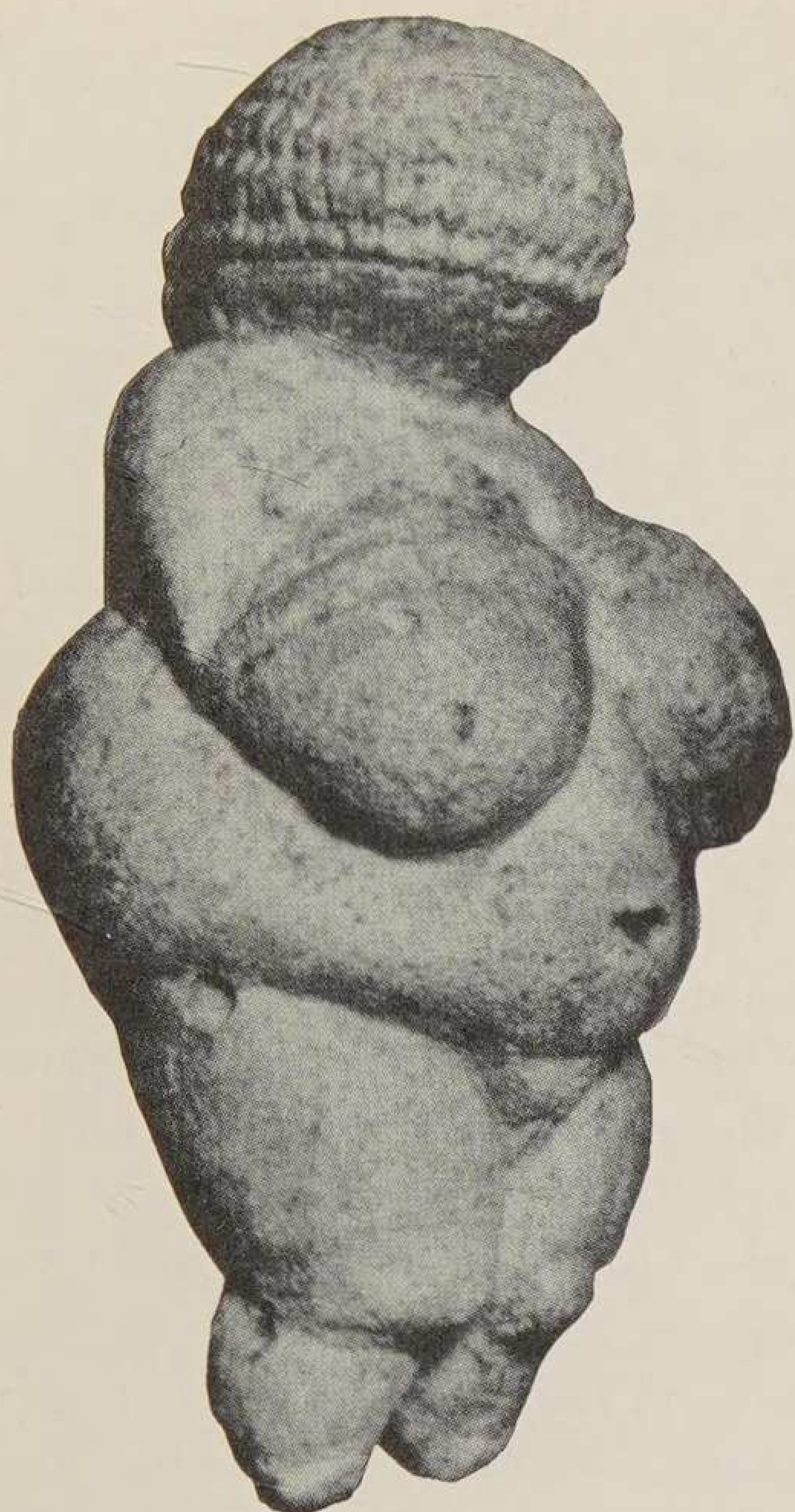
I have read somewhere of an old Chinese curse: "May you be born in an interesting time!" This is a *very* interesting time: there are no models for *anything* that is going on. Everything is changing, even the law of the masculine jungle. It is a period of free fall into future, and each has to make his own way. The old models are not working, the new have not yet appeared. In fact, it is we who are even now shaping the new in the shaping of our interesting lives. And that is the whole sense (in mythological terms) of the present challenge: we are the "Ancestors" of an age to come, the unwitting generators of its supporting myths, the mythic models that will inspire its lives. In a very real sense, therefore, this is a moment of creation; for, as has been said: "No one puts new wine into old wineskins; if he does, the wine will burst the skins and the wine is lost, and so are the skins; but new wine is for fresh skins" (Mark 2:22). We are to become the preparers, that is to say, of the fresh wineskins for a new and heady wine—of which we are already having the first taste.

The Goddess in the Old Stone Age

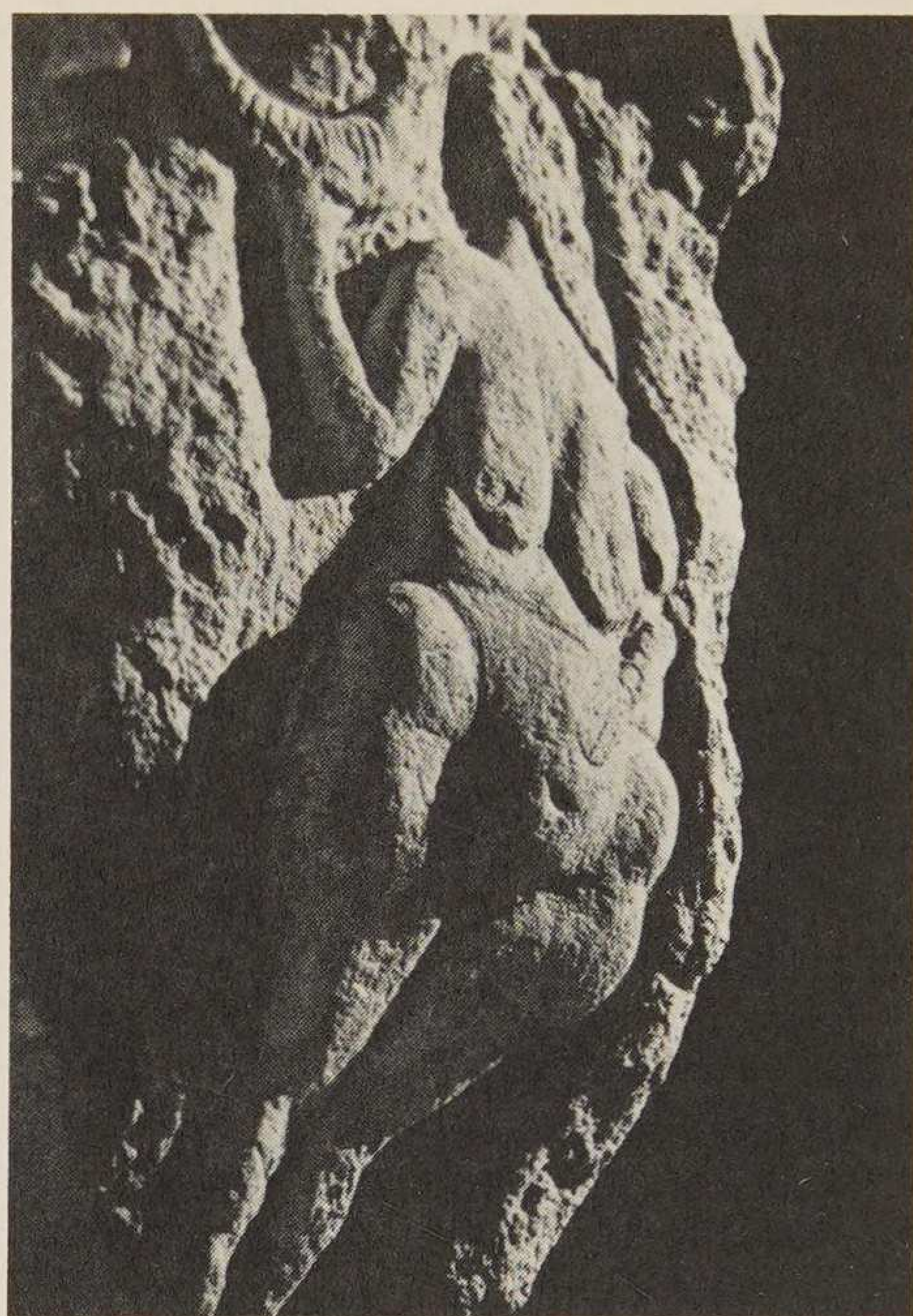
In the art of the Old Stone Age, from the period of the painted paleolithic caves of southern France and northern Spain, about 30,000 to 10,000 B.C., the female is represented in those now well-known little "Venus" figurines, as simply naked. Her body is her magic: it both invokes the male and is the vessel of all human life. Woman's magic is thus primary, and of nature. The male, in contrast, is always represented in a role of some kind, performing a function, doing something. (And indeed, even today, we address and regard the woman in terms of her beauty, but the male in terms of what he can do, what he has done, what his job is.)

The life in those times was of hunting and foraging tribes, the women gathering roots, berries, and small game and the men engaged in the dangerous great hunt, as well as defending their wives and daughters from marauders—for women, you must know, are valuable, as well as interesting, booty. The bow and arrow were not yet invented. Hunting and fighting encounters were at close hand. And the animals were enormous: wooly mammoths and rhinoceroses, huge bears, cattle herds, and lions. Under such circumstances—and these circumstances had already prevailed for hundreds of thousands of years: indeed, it was under those conditions that the bodies which we inhabit today evolved and became established in their functions—there developed and was maintained a radical split between the world and interests of the women and the men. There was not only a biological selection to function, but also a social training in two totally different directions.

The little female figurines have been found, not in the great painted caves, which were of the men's rites, but in the actual shelters, where the families lived. No one ever *lived* in the deep, dark, dank, and dan-



Venus of Willendorf



Venus of Laussel

gerous caves. Those were reserved for the rituals of a male magic: converting boys into courageous men, instructing them in the rites of the hunt, and by means of those rites appeasing the beasts, thanking them for having given their lives, and magically returning their lives to the womb of the mother of us all, this earth, the dark, deep, awesome womb of the great cave itself, for rebirth. The beautiful animal forms on the rock walls of these earliest temples of mankind (wombs of the goddess Earth, as later the cathedrals were to be of Mother Church) are the seed forms of the animal herds above, on the surface of the upper-world animal plains. It is amazing, how, when one is down in those caves, in the absolute dark, with all sense of direction lost, the light world above is but a memory and, curiously, but a shadow world. The reality is down here. The herds and all the lives up there are secondary: it is from here that they derive, and to here that they will return. In several of the greatest of these caves we have the portraits of the ceremonial masters—shamans, wizards, or whatever they might have been. And they are not shown simply standing naked, like the little Venus figurines, but in costume, masked, doing something. The great example is the so-called "Sorcerer" of the cave known as *Les Trois Frères*. But there are others. And they are always masked in semi-animal forms, doing something as magicians of the great hunt.

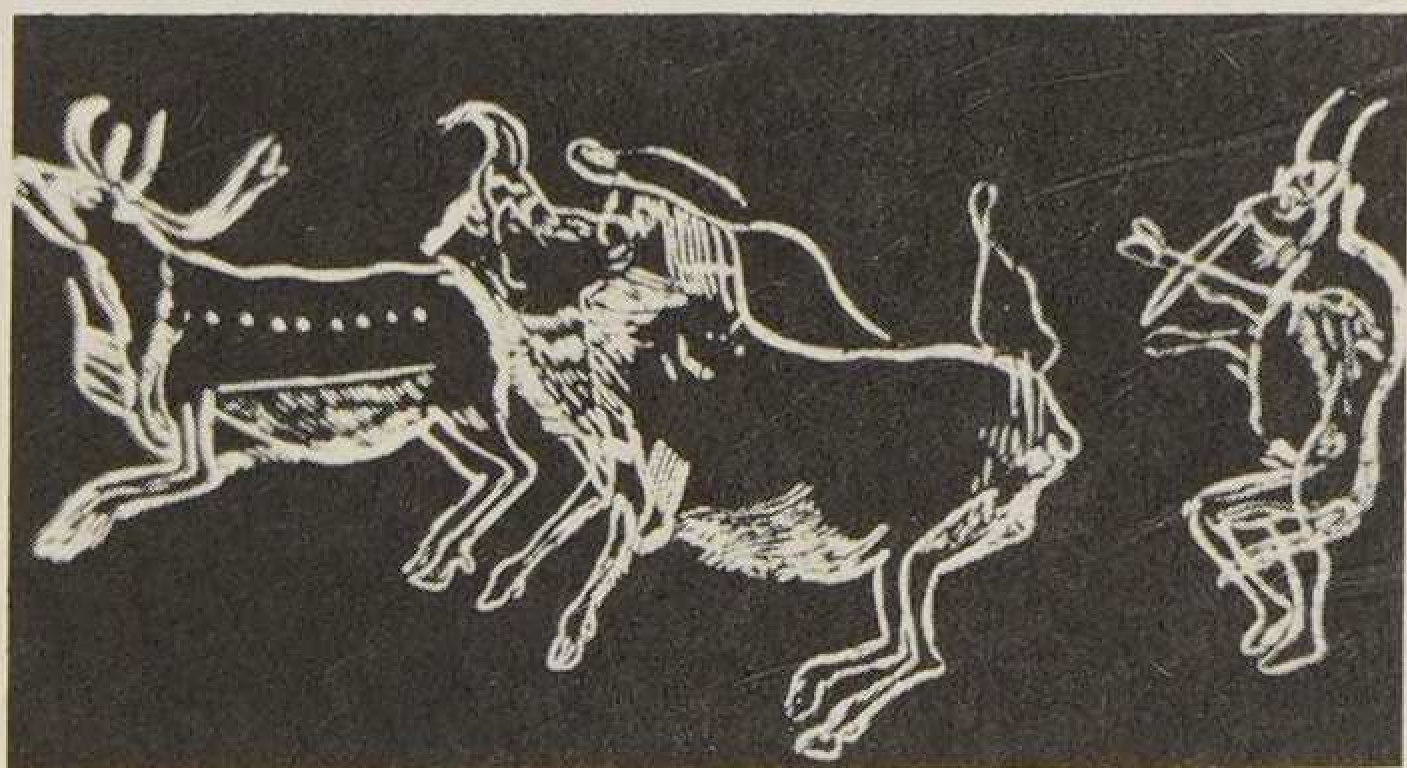
Female and Male Magic: In Conflict and Accord

There is some evidence that between the two magics of the female and male sides of the primitive hunting and gathering stages of life there was not only a tension, but also, at times, an outbreak of physical violence. In the mythologies of a number of very primitive societies (Pygmies of the Congo, the Ona of Tierra del Fuego, etc.),

we find a legend of the following kind: Originally all magical power resided with the women. The men then murdered them all, keeping alive only the youngest girls, who were never taught what their mothers had known, the men having taken that knowledge to themselves. And, in fact, in one of the big dwelling shelters of the paleolithic age in the south of France (at Laussel) there were found a number of female figurines lying broken, the suggestion being that they might have been at some time deliberately destroyed.

Generally, where there is a men's legend of this kind and a male society of secret rites, the women are seriously intimidated by a pantheon of deliberately invented spooks which appear (in masks) when the male rites are being enacted. However—and here is the big surprise—as Colin Turnbull tells us in *The Forest People: A Study of the Pygmies of the Congo*, there may also take place, on rare and most holy occasions, male-rite ceremonials in which the women fully participate, and the secret truth then appears, that the women really know all about the men's rites and are themselves recognized, still, as possessors of the greater and essential power. The other belief system is secondary, not of nature, but of the social order, and is assented to by the members of both sexes in a sophisticated, socially useful game of make-believe.

Dancer in buffalo mask, Les Trois Fréres



The Goddess of the Early Planters

Very late in the history of human life on this earth the arts were developed of plant and animal domestication, and with these a shift of authority followed from the male to the female side of the biological equation. No longer hunting and slaughtering, but planting and fostering became the high concerns; and since the earth's magic and woman's are the same—giving both life and its nourishment—not only did the role of the Goddess become the central interest of mythology, but the prestige of women in the villages became enlarged as well. If there was ever anything on earth like a matriarchy (which I doubt), it would have to have been in one or another of the early planting centers—of which there now seem to have been originally three: 1. Southeast Asia (Thailand, etc.), about 10,000 B.C., or perhaps earlier; 2. Southeast Europe and the Near East, also about 10,000 B.C.; and 3. Middle America and Peru, some four or five thousand years later. The large question of possible influences from one domain to another has not been settled. But in any case, there is a myth widely disseminated throughout Southeast Asia, the Pacific Isles, and the Americas which appears to have been basic to many of the earliest planting cultures.

The plant domesticates in the Southeast Asian area, from which this myth seems to have originated, were such as the yam, taro, and the sago palm, which are reproduced not by seed, but by slips and cuttings. The animals were the pig, the dog, and barnyard fowl, familiars of the household. The episodes of the myth take place in a timeless mythological age, the Age of the Ancestors, when there was no distinction between female and male, or even between human beings and beasts. It was of an undifferentiated, dreamlike kind, until, at a certain moment, the end moment, a murder was enacted. In some of the myths the whole group slew the victim. In others the act was of a single individual. In all, the body is cut up, the pieces buried, and out of those buried parts the food plants grow by which human life in this world is now supported. We are living, that is to say, on the substance of the body of a sacrificed god.

Moreover, at the moment of that sacrifice, when death came into the world and with it the flow of time, there occurred also a separation of the sexes; so that with death there came the possibility of procreation and birth. The pairs-of-opposites, thus, of male and female, death and birth (possibly, also, the knowledge of good and evil, as in the biblical version of this widespread myth) came into the world, together with food, at the end of the Mythological Age, by way of the mythological act of a murder, after which there evolved the world of time and differentiation. And the high rites by which this world of time is kept in being, the sacramental rites, are normally observances of a sacrifice in reenactment of that Mythological Act. Indeed, symbolically interpreted, even the sacrifice on the Cross of him whose "flesh is meat indeed" and whose "blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55) was a mystery in the sense (spiritualized) of this mythological theme. The cross is the astronomical sign of Earth ⊕ . Christ on the Cross, Christ on his mother's knees in the image of the "Pieta," and the buried sacrifice in the womb of the mother-goddess Earth, are equivalent signs.

• • •

Now the moon dies into the sun once a month, to be born from it again, just as the body of the first sacrifice died into the earth, to be born again as food. In this early goddess-centered mythology, therefore, the sun, like the earth, is female. Or, according to another image, the male moon begets itself in the sun: the creative fire of the sun and creative fire of the womb and of menstrual blood being then the same. Equivalent, as well, is the fire of a sacrificial altar.

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Our earliest images of the Great Goddess of the planting-culture mythologies are not from the Southeast Asian matrix, but from Europe and the Near East, and they

Stone figure, Çatal Hüyük

are of a period from about 7000 to 5000 B.C. Among them is a little figure in stone from a village site know as Çatal Hüyük, in southern Anatolia (southern Turkey, as it is known today), which perfectly illustrates the mythic role of the female in this context. She is shown back to back with herself, in one aspect embracing an adult male and in the other, holding a child. She is the transformer. She receives the seed of the past and through the magic of her body transmutes it into future, the male representing the energy so transformed. A male child thus carries forward the life—or as India would say, the dharma, the duty and law—of his father. And the mother is the vessel through which the miracle comes to pass.

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The animal generally symbolic of the power of the sun is the lion; that of the moon is the bull, whose shining horns suggest the crescent form. Again from Çatal Hüyük we have a ceramic figurine showing the Goddess enthroned, giving birth, flanked and supported by lions; and from Rome, six millenniums later, we have a marble image of the same Anatolian goddess (now named Cybele), also enthroned and flanked by lions. In still another image from Çatal Hüyük (a bas relief on a chapel

wall) we again see the goddess giving birth, not to a human infant, this time, but to a bull. The moon dies into the sun: the bull is pounced upon by the lion. The moon is the celestial sign of the sacrifice: the bull is the animal sacrificed on earth in the altar fire, the earthly counterpart of the sun as well as of the fire of the womb. Analogously, the bodies of the dead are in sacrifice either interred in the womb of the earth, or committed to the funeral pyre, for rebirth.

In one of the early Indian Upanishads (*Chandogya* 5. 3-10), of about 700 B.C., there is an account of the two possible spiritual ways to be followed in death by those whose bodies are burned on the funeral pyre: the way of the smoke and the way of the flame. The first carries one to the moon, the sphere of the Fathers, for rebirth, but the second to the sun, the golden sun-door to eternity and disengagement from the bounds of time, released and never to return. Thus the Great Goddess in the form of the sun, who pours into the phenomenal world the energy and light that brought it into being and now sustains it, may also become, for those who (as the Scriptures say) have yielded all to the fire of her consuming love, at once the messenger and the golden portal of the Perfection of Wisdom.

And so it is told that when the Prince Gautama Shakyamuni, in the thirtieth year of his age, was seated on the Immovable Spot, beneath the Bo Tree of Enlightenment, he was approached by the Lord of the Illusion of Life, whose magic moves the world, and whose name is Kama ("Desire"), Mara ("Death": the Fear of Death), and Dharma ("Duty" and the "Law"). As Kama he displayed the forms of his three voluptuous daughters, but Gautama was unmoved. As Mara he flung at the Prince all the weaponry of his demonic host, but Gautama was unmoved. Then as Dharma he

Enthroned goddess giving birth, Çatal Hüyük

Cybele, the Anatolian goddess

challenged the one there absorbed in meditation to prove his right to the Immovable Spot; whereupon the Yogi simply touched the earth with the fingers of his right hand, calling the Great Goddess to witness to his right, and with a sound as of thunder, a universe of thunder, with a hundred, a thousand, a hundred thousand roars, a voice testified, and the elephant upon which Dharma rode bowed in reverence to the Buddha.

Then the Cosmic Serpent, Muchalinda, who lived beneath the Bo Tree in a vast hollow among the roots, came up to worship. And when a prodigious thunderstorm arose with a freezing gale and terrible darkness, to protect the one there sitting in absorption, the great serpent wrapped his coils seven times around the body, spreading his giant cobra hood above the head, and for seven days so remained, until the sky had cleared. Then he relaxed his coils, assumed the form of a gentle youth, bowed in worship of the Blessed One, and returned to his place.

Her Golden Age

The first high period of the kingdoms and the power and the glory of the Goddess was that of the dawn of civilization in the valleys of the Tigris-Euphrates and Nile. In both areas her earliest images (fourth to third millenniums B.C.) show a mother standing with her infant in her arms; and in the mythologies she appears in many forms and roles representing her universality as both the facilitator of transformations and the enclosing, protecting, and embracing governess of the process.

In Egypt she early appears as the cow-faced goddess of the enclosing horizon, Hathor, the "House (*hat*) of Horus (*hor*)." She is the Wild Cow whose four legs are the pillars of the heavens, her belly spangled with stars. Or she is the overarching sky-goddess Nut, whose head and arms are at the western horizon, legs and feet at the eastern. Her spouse in this mythology is the earth—the earth-god Geb or Keb, whereas in the Tigris-Euphrates area these cosmic positions are reversed; the male is above, as heaven, and the female below, as the earth.

In the beginning, as we there learn, from the depths of the primeval sea a cosmic mountain emerged. The name of the sea was of a goddess, Nammu, and the name of the mountain, An-ki, "Heaven and Earth." An (above) begot on Ki (below) the air-god Enlil, who tore the two apart and pressed the sky, his father, on high. We know the similar tale from Hesiod (*Theogony* 153 ff.), of Ouranos, Heaven, separated from the earth-goddess Gaia by their son, Kronos. And from the Maori of New Zealand (in the sphere of the Southeast Asian agricultural matrix) we have the story again: of how the heaven-father, Rangi, lay so closely upon Papa, the earth, that their children, the gods, could not leave their mother's womb, until Tane-mahuta, the forest-god, lay on his back upon his mother and with his feet thrust his father high above. In Egypt the separating god was not the child but the male parent of the cosmic couple: Shu, the air-god, consort of Tefnut, a lion-headed goddess sometimes identified with the also lion-headed Sekhmet, who typifies the fierce, destructive power of the sun, but is the consort of Ptah, the god-mummy of the dark night of the moon.

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It was within the bounds and embrace of such female personifications of aspects of the being of the universe that all the life and action of both mankind and the gods took place throughout the centuries of the earliest civilizations. The pharaohs of the first dynasties, revered as incarnations of Osiris, who "fills the horizon," wore in token of this sovereignty a belt ornamented before, behind, and at the sides with medallions of the cowlike face of Hathor of the Horizon; while hanging from the belt behind was the tail of a bull, the moon-bull, her spouse, who begets himself. The hawk-headed son of Osiris, Horus, who was identified with the solar disk, crossed the heavens in a daily passage along the belly of the goddess Nut,

at sundown entering her mouth in the west and at dawn being born from her womb in the east, self-begotten as it were, or a virgin birth.

And not only all-embracing: the goddesses were equally the agents of all transformations. In the fundamental legend of the death and resurrection of Osiris, it was because of his seduction by the wife, Nephthys, of his brother, Set, that the first great Pharaoh was slain, clapped in a coffin, and thrown into the Nile. And it was then by virtue of the loyalty of his own wife, Isis, that he was sought for and resurrected, to reign now forever in the Underworld as Judge and Lord of the Dead. It is a long and fantastic tale; but in brief: When she had found the body of her spouse, Isis lay upon it in grief and conceived of it the god Horus, who then assumed the role of Pharaoh in the world of the living. Osiris' throne in the Underworld is attended and protected by Nephthys and Isis together; that of Horus, the living Pharaoh, is the very body of Isis herself. Like Mary, she is the Mother of God, with the Savior enthroned on her knee. Indeed, the pharaohs are even represented nursing at her breast.

The Degradation of the Goddess

Whereas throughout the nuclear Fertile Crescent and across Asia Minor into the Balkans, the villages, towns, and civilizations of the Great Goddess were maintained chiefly by agriculture, in the neighboring great regions to the south and to the north tough tribes of cattle nomads ranged: to the south, Semitic sheep and goat herders, who, in time, mastered the camel; and in the north the various, scattered Indo-European races, battle-axe people and cattle herders, who, in the fourth millennium B.C. acquired weapons of bronze, in the third mastered the horse and later invented the war chariot, in the second acquired iron, and by the end of the first millennium B.C. were dominant across Europe and western Asia, from the Irish Sea to Ceylon. These warrior tribes were not patient tillers of the soil, but nomadic raiders, and their chief patron-gods were thunder-hurlers, very like themselves: among the Semites, Marduk, Ashshur, and Yahweh, for example, and among the Indo-Europeans, Zeus, Thor, Jove, and Indra.

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The earliest of the great Semitic kings in Mesopotamia was Sargon of Agade, about 2350 B.C., the famous legend of whose lowly birth in secrecy by a mother who placed him in a basket of rushes, sealed it with bitumen, and set it in the river, became about a millennium and a half later, a model for the legend of the birth and exposure of Moses (Exodus 2:1-3). "The river bore me up," the account of Sargon reads; "and it carried me to Akku, the irrigator, who took me from the river, raised me as his son, made of me a gardener: and while I was a gardener, the goddess Ishtar loved me. Then I ruled the kingdom." (See Leonard William King, *Chronicles Concerning Early Babylonian Kings,* London: 1907, Vol. II, pp. 87-91).

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Hammurabi of Babylon (c. 1750 B.C.) was the second of these most illustrious Semitic warrior kings. It has been suggested that he may have been the monarch remembered in Genesis 10: 8-12 as Nimrod, "a mighty hunter before the Lord." It was from the period of his reign that the Babylonian epic of the sun-god Marduk dates, whose victory over Tiamat, the old goddess of the primeval sea, marks the moment of a decisive transfer of loyalty in that quarter of the world from the universal goddess of nature to an assortment of politically established tribal gods.

Marduk was the patron god of Babylon, which city Hammurabi had made great. The older gods of the earlier pantheon were sitting in abject fear of the approaching great-great grandmother of them all, when the brand new young hero-god, incomprehensible and difficult to look upon (he had four eyes and as many ears, and when his

lips moved, fire blazed forth), went against her. Tiamat, uttering wild, piercing screams, trembling, shaking to the roots of her limbs, pronounced an incantation as she advanced. But the Lord Marduk spread out his battle net to enmesh her, and when she opened her mouth to the full, let fly into it an evil wind that poured into her belly. He shot into her an arrow that tore into her inward parts, pierced her heart, and she was undone.

Then with his merciless mace he smashed her skull, and with his scimitar split her like a shellfish. He set one half above, as a heavenly roof, that the waters above should not escape, placed the other half over the abyssal Deep, and when that work of world creation was done, assigned the gods to their places, variously, in Heaven, Earth, and the Abyss. Finally, then, he shaped Man to serve the gods, so that all should be free to repose at ease (*Enuma elish*, Tablets I to VI.57).

How interesting! In the older view the goddess Universe was alive, herself organically the earth, the horizon, and the heavens. Now she is dead, and the universe is not an organism, but a building, with gods at rest in it in luxury: not as personifications of the energies in their manners of operation, but as luxury-tenants, requiring service. And Man, accordingly, is not as a child born to flower in the knowledge of his own eternal portion, but as a robot fashioned to serve.

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The full spiritual import of this total victory of the male over the female principle becomes evident in the second great Babylonian epic of Hammurabi's time, the legend of the hero-king Gilgamesh, who, when struck with the fear of death, set forth to gain immortality. After certain adventures, he learned of a plant of eternal life at the bottom of the primeval sea, dove for it and obtained it; but was so fatigued by the adventure that, when he had come ashore, he fell asleep with the plant, uneaten, beside him. A passing serpent consumed it. And that is why snakes can now cast their skins—as the moon its shadow—to be born again, whereas Man must die.

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Sargon I was beloved of the Goddess. By Hammurabi's Marduk she was slain. In the next major chronicle of these desert-born warrior kings, she is cursed.

For, as we have heard: When the Lord God discovered that the man fashioned to work in his garden had been lured by his wife and a serpent into eating the fruit of the tree of a knowledge which he had reserved for himself, he cursed the serpent to crawl on its belly, the woman to give birth in pain, and his disobedient gardener to toil "in the sweat of his face" on an earth of dust cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles. And then, as we read: "lest he put forth his hand and take also of the tree of life and live forever—therefore Yahweh sent them forth from the garden...and at the east of the garden of Eden placed the cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way, to guard the way to the tree of life" (Genesis 3).

It is surely clear (and can be shown) that the two trees here in question are aspects of the one Bo Tree of Enlightenment and Eternal Life under which the Prince Gautama sat, where the cosmic serpent Muchalinda lived, and the Goddess (here in reduced form as the serpent's messenger, Eve) testified to the right of Man to come to the knowledge of the now forbidden Light.

Her Return

One is moved to ask why the Hebrews, of all the peoples on this beautiful earth, turned their backs so resolutely on the Goddess and her glorious world. The earth of which Adam was fashioned is dust ("you are dust, and to dust you shall return", Gen. 3:19). The Goddess of the neighboring Canaanites is called the "Abomination" (2 Kings 23:13). And indeed, "there is no God in all the earth but in Israel" (2 Kings 5:15), and that God, of course, is this local tribal Yahweh—alone: "Our God is one!"

Cult of the tree, Crete

A completely contrary understanding and attitude is represented in the mythological systems of the other great complex of warrior tribes that in those brutal centuries were overrunning the settled agricultural towns and cities of the fourth to first millenniums B.C.. Like the Bedouins of the desert, they too were patriarchal herding folk and their leading tribal gods were gods of war—finally subject, however, to the larger powers of nature and, beyond these, the round or rhythm of Destiny, Moira, "Fate," a goddess to whom even Zeus was subject.

When the Indo-European tribes came with their gods into fresh territories, it was not their custom generally to wipe out the gods and cults of the local shrines, but to recognize that as nature gods and goddesses these divinities were other names and forms of their own. The Indo-European style was to let their gods take over the local shrines, marry the resident goddesses, and even assume the names and roles of the deities formerly in charge. By this means the comparatively barbarous, warlike thunder-hurlers of the original, invading pantheons became progressively tamed and tempered to the domestic manners of an agriculturally based, proper civilization.

Freud asks, in *Moses and Monotheism*, why it was that just when all the other peoples of the eastern Mediterranean were learning to read their myths poetically, the Jews became more confirmed than ever in the concretistic (Freud calls it "religious") way of interpreting their idea of God. The obvious reason, I would say, is that both they and their tribal deity failed to realize that the waters of the "Deep" (*tehom*) over which Elohim was brooding and blowing in the first two verses of Genesis 1, was not just water, but the old Babylonian goddess of the primeval sea herself, Tiamat (*ti'amat*), and that his failure to appreciate the poetry

of her presence there was the beginning of his whole misunderstanding even of himself. It was to her, his cosmological wife, that he should have turned to listen, occasionally, when moved to throw the Book at their disobedient children.

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It is wonderful, the way in which, both in India and in Greece, the presence and power of the goddesses came gradually back to authority following the devastating ravages in both regions of the Indo-European invasions (mid-second millennium B.C.). By the eighth century B.C. in Greece we have the *Odyssey*—which Samuel Butler believed might have been written by a woman—where it is told how the nymph Circe of the Braided Locks, who could turn men into swine and back again, introduced the warrior Odysseus to the mysteries, not only of her own bed, but also of, first, the world of the dead, and then, the Island of the Sun, her father. From India of the same date, we have the important *Kena Upanishad*, where the goddess Uma, daughter of the Snowy Peak, Himalaya, introduces three of the chief gods of the Indo-European, Vedic pantheon (Agni, Vayu, and Indra) to the transcendent-immanent mystery, *brahman*, of which they were themselves but the ignorant agents.

In Greece, at Eleusis, the ancient temple of the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone became a classical shrine of enormous influence; the oracle at Delphi, of the Pythoness, equally great. And in India, progressively, the worship of the numerous names and forms of the cosmic goddess Kali, "Black Time," became the leading and most characteristic religion of the land.

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In the year 327 B.C. Alexander the Great entered the Punjab, and the gates were opened between East and West. He had already conquered the whole of the Near East, and the cults and mysteries of Egypt, Greece, Anatolia, and Iran were running together in a vast movement of syncretistic insights. By about 100 B.C. the Old Silk Road (as it has been called) was in use between Syria, India, and China, and by 49 B.C. Julius Caesar had conquered Gaul. So that, by the time of the birth of Christ there was a traffic, not only of goods, but also of ideas and cults, throughout the civilized world. And so it was that in the second century A.D. the goddess Isis of Old Egypt could announce to her just initiated devotee, Lucius Apuleius of Numidia:

> I am she that is the natural mother of all things, mistress and governess of all the elements, the initial progeny of worlds, chief of the powers divine, queen of all that are in hell, the principal of them that dwell in heaven, manifested alone and under one form in all the gods and goddesses. At my will the planets of the sky, the wholesome winds of the seas, and the lamentable silences of hell be disposed; my name, my divinity is adored throughout the world, in divers manners, in variable customs, and by many names. For the Phrygians that are the first of all men call me the Mother of the gods of Pessinus; the Athenians, which are sprung from their own soil, Cecropian Minerva; the Cyprians, which are girt about by the sea, Paphian Venus; the Cretans which bear arrows, Dictynian Diana; the Sicilians, which speak three tongues, infernal Proserpine; the Eleusians, their ancient goddess Ceres; some Juno, others Bellona; others Hecate; others Rhamnusia, and principally both sorts of the Ethiopians, which dwell in the orient and are enlightened by the morning rays of the sun, and the Egyptians, which are excellent in all kinds of ancient doctrine, and by their proper ceremonies accustomed to worship me, do call me by my true name, Queen Isis. Behold I am come to take pity of their fortune and tribulation.
>
> *The Golden Ass of Apuleius,*
> *W. Adlington translation, The Modern Library*

The principal shrine of this goddess at that time in the whole of the Near East was at Ephesus, now in Turkey, where her name and form were of Artemis, Diana; and it was there, in that city, in the Year of our Lord 431, that Mary was declared to be, what the Goddess had been from before the first tick of time, namely Theotokos, "Mother of God."

"Isis teaching Hermes Trismegistus and Moses" by Pinturicho, Room of the Saints, Apartamento Borgia, The Vatican

Envoy

And is it likely, do you think, after all her years and millenniums of changing forms and conditions, that she is now unable to let her daughters know who they are?

INANNA
Queen of Heaven and Earth

by Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer

For over a year Diane Wolkstein has been working with Sumerian authority, Samuel Noah Kramer, on a cycle of poems about the goddess Inanna. The scholar supplied all the available deciphered texts on The Goddess; the storyteller worked and reworked the materials. Together they filled in the gaps, question marks, and paraphrases and provided explanatory notes and bibliographical references; together they are telling her story in the book INANNA, Queen of Heaven and Earth.

The following excerpt is from the very end of the cycle. After Inanna has brought the world order (the me*) to her people and begun her reign on earth, has loved her earthly king, Dumuzi (Ushumgalanna), and has left him to descend to the underworld, she returns to Sumer, and the people sing her praises:*

Honored Counselor

Honored Counselor, Ornament of Heaven, Joy of An!
When sweet sleep has ended in the bedchamber
You appear like bright daylight.

When all the lands and the people of Sumer assemble,
Those sleeping on the roofs and those sleeping by the walls,
When they sing your praises, bringing their concerns to you,
You study their words.

You render a cruel judgment against the evildoer;
You destroy the wicked.
You look with kindly eyes on the straightforward;
You give that one your blessing.

My Lady looks in sweet wonder from heaven.
The people walk before the holy Inanna.
The Lady Who Rises Into the Heavens, Inanna, is radiant.

To you, Inanna, I sing!
The Lady Who Rises Into the Heavens is radiant on the horizon.

Lady of the Evening

At evening, the Radiant Star, the Great Light that Fills the Sky,
The Lady of the Evening appears in the heavens.
The people in all the lands lift their eyes to her.
The men purify themselves; the women cleanse themselves.
The ox in his yoke lows to her.
The sheep pile up the dust in their fold.
The beasts of Sumugan, the numerous creatures of the steppe,
The four-legged creatures of the high steppe,
The lush orchards and gardens, the green reeds and trees,
The fish of the deep, the birds of heaven—
My Lady makes them hurry to their sleeping places.

The living creatures and the numerous people kneel before her.
Those selected by the matriarchs prepare immense quantities of food.
The Lady refreshes herself in the land.
There is festive play in the land.
The young man makes love with his beloved.

My Lady looks in sweet wonder from heaven.
The people walk before the holy Inanna.
Inanna, the Lady of the Evening, is radiant.

The Lady of the Evening is radiant on the horizon.
I sing your praises, holy Inanna.

The Amazement of the Land

The Amazement of the Land, the Lone Star, the Evening Star,
The Brave One Who Appears in the Heavens—
All the lands fear her.

The faithful people of Sumer bow to her.
The young man on the road makes his way to her.
The ox raises his head in his yoke to her.
The people hasten to the pure Inanna.

They prepare with care for My Lady.
Everything is made abundant for her in the storehouse of the land.

In the pure places of the steppe
On the high roofs of the dwellings
On the platforms of the city
They make offerings to her:
Heaped up incense like sweet smelling cedar;
Fine sheep, long haired sheep, fat sheep.
They purify the earth for My Lady;
They celebrate her in song.

They fill the table of the land with the first fruits—
Butter, dates, cheese, fruits of all kinds.
They pour dark beer for her.
They pour light beer for her.
Dark beer, *emmer* beer,
Emmer beer for My Lady.

The *sagub* vat and the *lamsari* vat make a bubbling noise for her.
They make *gug* bread in date syrup for her.
They pour out honey and wine for her at sunrise.
Beer at dawn, flour, flour in honey.

The gods and people of Sumer go to her with food and drink.
They feed Inanna in the pure clean place.

The Joy of Sumer

The people of Sumer assemble in the palace,
The house which guides the land.
The king builds a throne for the queen of the palace.
The king sits with her on the throne.

In order to care for the life of all the lands
The exact first day of the month is closely examined.
And on the day of the disappearance of the moon
The *Me* are perfectly carried out
So that the New Year's Day, the Day of Rites, may be properly
    determined
And a sleeping place be set up for Inanna.

The people cleanse the rushes with sweet smelling cedar oil.
They arrange the rushes for the bed.
They spread a coverlet over the bed,
A coverlet to sweeten the bed,
A coverlet to rejoice the hearts.

The queen bathes her holy lap.
She bathes for the lap of Dumuzi.
Pure Inanna washes with soap.
She sprinkles fragrant cedar oil on the ground.

The king goes with lifted head to her holy lap.
Dumuzi goes with lifted head to the lap of Inanna.
Ushumgalanna lies down beside her.
Tenderly he caresses her holy lap.

After the queen has rested on his holy lap
After they have held each other in love
The queen murmurs softly, "O Dumuzi, you are surely my beloved."

Piling up offerings, performing laving rites,
Heaping up incense, burning juniper resin,
Bearing food offerings, bearing bowls,
The people enter the Egalmah at the kings's request.

He embraces his beloved wife.
The king embraces the pure Inanna.
Inanna, seated on the royal throne, shines like daylight.
The king, like the sun, sits radiantly by the side of Inanna.
He arranges abundance, lushness, and plenty before her.
He assembles the people of Sumer before her.

The musicians play upon their instruments—
The loud instrument which drowns out the south storm,
The sweet *algar*-instrument, the ornament of the palace,
The stringed instrument, the source of joy of all people.
They play for Inanna a song which rejoices the heart.

The king stretches out his hand for food and drink.
Ushumgalanna stretches out his hand for food and drink.
The palace is festive. The king is joyous.
In the pure clean place they celebrate Inanna in song.
She is the Ornament of the Assembly, the Joy of Sumer!

The people spend the day in plenty.
The king stands before the assembly in great joy.
The king hails Inanna with the praise of the gods and the assembly:
"You are the Holy Priestess fashioned with heaven and earth."

Inanna, Oldest Daughter of Nanna, Lady of the Evening!

My Lady looks in sweet wonder from Heaven.
The people of Sumer parade before the holy Inanna.
The Lady Who Rises Into the Heavens, Inanna, is radiant.

Mighty, trustworthy, radiant, and ever youthful—
To You, Inanna, I sing!

Acknowledgment:
From INANNA, Queen of Heaven and Earth *by Diane Wolkstein and Samuel Noah Kramer. To be published by Harper & Row, May 1981.*

The Virgin, the Mother and the Shadow in American Art

by Bill Jacobson

Louise Nevelson—Atmospheres and Environments, The Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City, May 27-Sept. 14, 1980.

I somehow for myself feel independent of an audience and independent of human beings... Because my life was a solo and I can't thank too many people on earth. I'm not even grateful to some people who might think they have helped me... I wouldn't bend my knee one inch if there were not one Jesus Christ but the world was full of them. This is my life, and I don't permit people to intrude. I take full responsibility for what I've done and every time I say it I want to cry. That is true. And that is what gave me my strength and gave me my independence. And it gave me truly a great deal of sorrow. It's a total price.

—Louise Nevelson

The mammoth Louise Nevelson show currently at the Whitney Museum brings together again under one roof the works that established the sculptor's reputation in the second half of the 1950s as an American of world-wide renown, and does so by recreating the environments of her half dozen original New York shows. The entire

fourth floor is divided into five rooms: a gallery space where the early mature works are presented as individual objects; an all-black room containing the black altar-like pieces which have become her signatures; an all-white room containing the white pieces; an all-gold room containing the gold pieces; and a final all-black room which brings the exhibition into the present by enshrining "Mrs. N's Palace," an environment designed as one piece. Somewhat grandly, the show is presented as a "gift" in honor of Nevelson's 80th birthday and also as a celebration of the Museum's 50th anniversary. The sculptor herself oversaw the installation and clearly we are presented with the works she considers canonical, and they are presented in a way that she wishes them to be seen.

Putting aside the hortatory reviews in the *New York Times* and *Time*, the impact of the show on visitors here has been a mixture of disappointment, boredom, disbelief, and an unsettling sense of having encountered things unclean and taboo. Her best known and familiar works have been reassembled and transformed in vague "atmospheres." We could forgive her if the resulting whole were a greater work of art but the resulting environments undercut the substance of her prior achievement and merely leave us with shadowy theater. Kay Larson in a review (*Village Voice*, July 9, 1980) called it "a dominant mother Personality, the pre-liberation stereotype of a womanly, encompassing, slightly smothering maternalism." Omnipresent are the room titles, redolent of empire and a private mythology. Visitors scurry through, as though on a visit to a cemetery. The museum has become a deserted plain or a series of tombs given over to the dominion of inanimate objects, the relics of a world we no longer understand. A message surely is buried in the Nevelsonian hieroglyphics, but we have no Rosetta stone.

Coming on the heels of the Clifford Still show at the Metropolitan, and last season's retrospective of Jasper John, the show is the latest in a series of exhibitions intended to consolidate reputations and to enshrine forever the martyrs of American Art, by having, temporarily at least, the opposite effect. By some quirk of fate, this show runs concurrent with and rival to the Picasso show downtown at the Modern, a museum long dedicated to the primacy of the School of Paris. Comparison is inevitable. The latter reverses the downward trend of over a decade, and raises Picasso's stock; the Nevelson show deflates perhaps what was over-inflated.

An artist capable of confronting us so directly and also capable of such absolutely honest self-exposure casts a shadow, a shadow that lies behind the substance of the American achievement of the mid-century. Nevelson has called herself, "The Architect of Shadow...I arrest it and I give it solid substance." It is in this role that I find the exhibit most fascinating, and perhaps liberating. The symbiosis of substance and shadow is meant here not just literally, as in the physicality of her sculpture, but metaphorically, as in the division of the objective psyche into the Persona and the Shadow, or as in metahistory, the inextricable relationship of artist, audience, and time. Just as Nevelson's sculpture possesses both a positive and a negative space, so that each reveals the other, the same observation is true of Nevelson's personality in the context of American cultures, for as I read the icons, her figure is simultaneously our cultural gestalt. Her shadow illumines the landscape of American art.

The key to the Nevelsonian hieroglyphics, and especially its current assemblage, lies in her autobiography, *Dawns + Dusks*. Here we find two self-portraits. The overt and most fully realized portrait is that of Nevelson the professional, the Persona she wishes above all the world to see. The tone is confrontory and the voice is official and authoritative. In it her words and acts cast shadows, in that they are presented in relief, but only the objects themselves are illumined. The other portrait is personal, the voice more plaintive, subjective, often

presented in the form of painful, raw, unedited memories, and is the shadow or "price" paid by the human being embedded in the titanic role of artist. The first is clearly a work of art and is a portrait of a life fully wrought; a success story. The other is clearly life, a glimpse of life often experienced, but abortive and poorly realized.

"I don't think that anyone that knew me in the beginning even suspected that I would be the one to arrive at certain things." In the recast story, everything becomes apocryphal. "From earliest childhood I knew I was going to be an artist...I had a blueprint all my life from childhood." This "blueprint" moreover was "ready-made." Nevelson's lifetime spans the entire twentieth century, and nearly all of that she has spent in New York. She came to this country as an infant, the child of Russian immigrants, and spent her entire formative years in Rockland, Maine. "Art was all that mattered to me" in childhood. At age twenty she decided she would marry, unseen, Charles Nevelson because he was rich, and he lived in New York. After the birth of her son, in 1922, she fell into a profound depression, abandoned the child (temporarily), and the marriage (permanently), and traveled in Europe, the seat of art. "I felt myself without rudders." She studied for a time with Hans Hoffman, the great teacher of the formal elements which were later to coalesce into American Abstract Expressionism. Then she discovered Picasso and cubism. The costs were terrific. The conflict between biological motherhood, and her assumed identity of creative mother of the arts must have been fierce. One gets the sense that the conflict mellowed out in later years only with the grandchildren. Her life at this point suggests the archetype of the mother who either loves too much or doesn't love at all, who abandons, only to return—a shadowy other half of American paternalism.

Her next twenty years were essentially basic training and exercise. While always deliberately an "outsider," she was in touch, vitally, with everything important going on aesthetically in the city. She took part in the WPA Project (working briefly with Diego Rivera on a mural), and took an active part in the intellectual ferment of the 30s. Her house and studio for a number of years was the meeting place for artists' forums, prior to the establishment of the Museum of Modern Art. In the 40s, Nierendorf, her dealer, said, "Mrs. Nevelson, you must not stay in America. This is a young country and a primitive country. You have the kind of mind that needs an older civilization." Characteristically, she replied, "But Mr. Nierendorf, this is a young country, and this is a pioneer country. I feel in my being that I'm a part of this, I was brought up here, and I want to be a part of it, of developing this country." With the war came the influx of important European artists and intellectuals. Without this catalyst, there would have been no subsequent American flowering. What they brought was the example of their lived commitment.

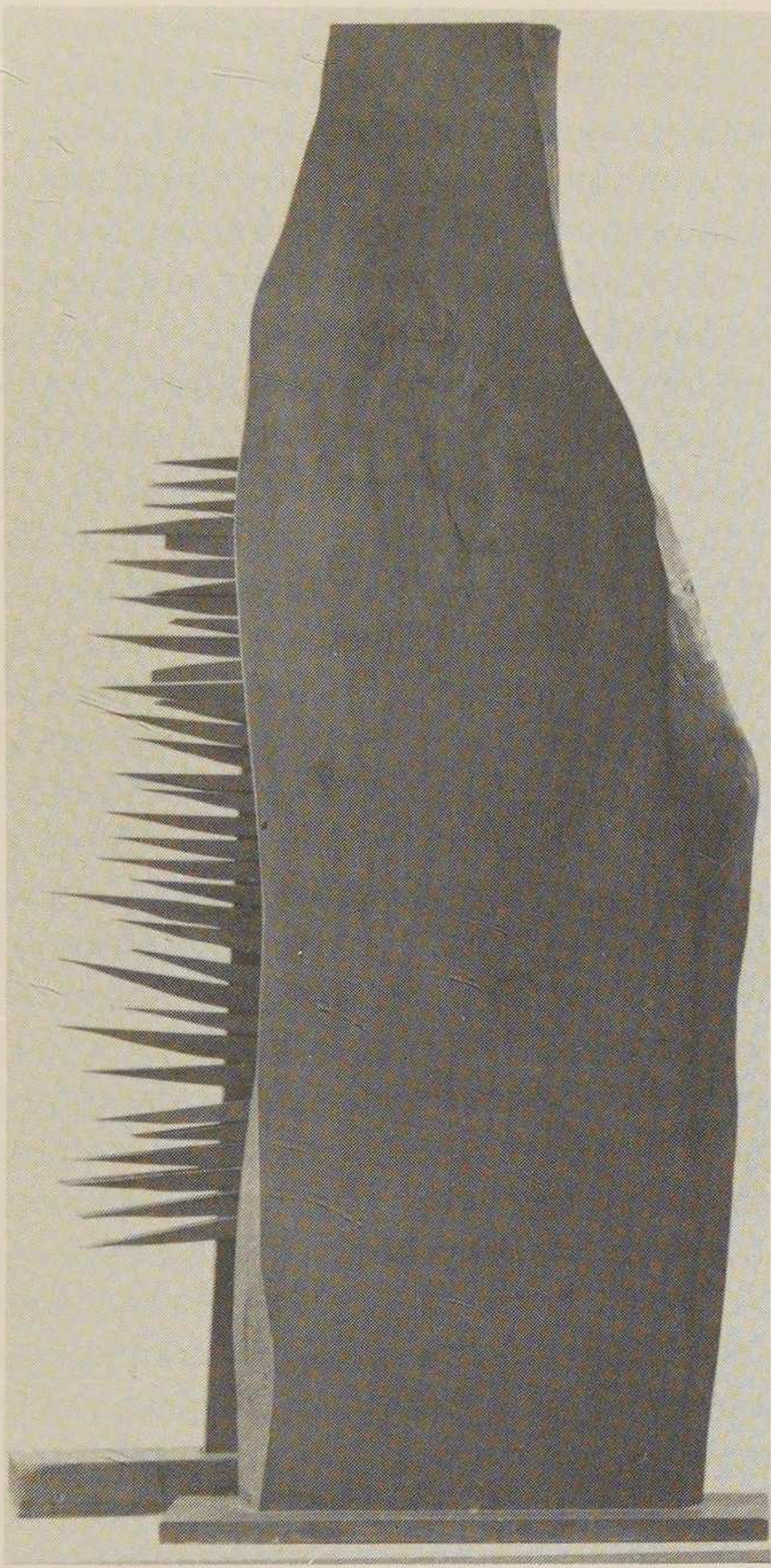
When the public was hungry both here and abroad for American Art in the 1950s, Nevelson was ready. She had begun using found objects out of necessity during the war years; she was already applying thick coats of black paint; and in 1950 she took two important trips to Mexico City and the Yucatan. The last, apparently, brought all the elements together and into focus, and she was ready to begin building her own vast empire. She was also ready emotionally. "Everyday people think of having a love affair...I can tell you that I think it is exciting, but it's not the everlasting quality that art is, that creation is...I am closer to the work than to anything on earth. That's the marriage."

While critical, not economic, success came early, in her eyes, true success came only when her achievement was confirmed in Europe, followed by the wealth that was showered upon her by American collectors wanting her pieces. Arp wrote a poem about her piece installed at the Museum of Modern Art: "many art lovers naturally

read about Arp's poem. And immediately I'd been established. So, you see when the time came, I must give credit to the great artists in Europe who forced the hand of the American people, in the art world, where it counted. They could no longer ignore my work." According to her scenario, only during these years since her success has she been truly alive. Living is equated with art and its production, not nature or life. In this life we see fully played out a blueprint of American Modernism. The myth locates its formal and aesthetic ancestry in Europe and its material sources in the new world. The reward is buckets of gold. Nevelson's life, then, is the very substance of the American experience of the first half of this century. Behind the "blueprint" lay an unexamined, blind urge to develop and fill out the emptiness of American space regardless of the cost.

The shadow side of Nevelson's narrative is less easily summarized. Her bitterness is as famous and monumental as her sculpture: "I have an opinion of people in the art world who have those big jobs, who overlook creativity, and deprive artists of their rightful place—which is murder. I didn't sell for practically thirty years. That meant I was deprived of a livelihood." As just as this statement is, I find it somewhat overdetermined in the context of her entire life. We find the same bitterness early in her statements about her childhood and her mother's fate. "She was misplaced in every conceivable way. She didn't want to get married either. Marriage made her very unhappy. She was a woman who should have been in a palace. I think that's my idea for myself... There was misplacement of love, misplacement of land, altogether. She just never adjusted." It is the great shadow of the mother and the experience of its archetype which both overwhelmed the child, Louise Berliawsky, and provided her with her "blueprint." This is frequently the lot of first generation Americans. They often live out incredibly difficult lives, dedicated to public service, in order to justify or make good on so much pain and sacrifice. In the arts, their lives are often dedicated to the recovery of their fantasy of their parents' lost world, a place romantic, civilized, and always aristocratic. In a home of "misplaced love" and in a "misplaced land," we also usually find a child's misplaced sense of guilt. Before such pain, how can a child's own dreams or self needs count? The issue is often self-rejection, and a life devoted to carrying out the child's fantasy of what would have been the fate of the parents had they not married and the child were never born. It is from this vantage point that we can see the special magical power of Nevelson's chosen material, found objects. "You're taking a discarded, beat-up piece that was no use to anyone, and you place it in a position where it goes to beautiful places: museums, libraries, universities, big private houses... well, it's like taking someone who has been in the gutter on the Bowery for years, neglected and overlooked. And someone comes along who sees how to take these things and transform them into total being." The theme is redemption through the activity of the ideal mother. The neglected child is redeemed only through a heroic, creative act, one in which the child gives up its own life, in order to fulfill the infantile dream of the mother. It is against a standard of absolute self-sacrifice that Nevelson expects us to measure the completeness of her production. In the final reckoning, "the cost" does not count. From the beginning it was a part of "the total price."

Nevelson's reassemblage of her icons into environments at the Whitney is so extreme that it has led me to read the exhibit as though she had deliberately destroyed the substance of her art in order that we can see beyond the material achievement to its shadows. The first room, a conventional gallery painted cream, is deceptive. The works have not yet been brought into absolute relationship. But the characters and the myth are all there in black and white. This is "The Royal Voyage" and the titles give away the game, the drama of "the family



First Personage

romance" rehearsed on the level of high art. We have the tall, stern, ravaged "King," and the shorter, featureless "Queen" as parental figures. There are the relics of a failed marriage: a "Black Wedding Cake," and an equally black "Wedding Chest." Placed at the center is Nevelson's own self-portrait, "First Personage." This is a double figure in silhouette. In the foreground is the massive Nevelson Persona, a headless, "upholstered" Victorian female body with maternal bust. Immediately behind it is the second figure, the shadow, a narrow, virginal stick, stuck through with three dozen sharp arrows or knives. Taken together the sculpture expresses the whole picture.

The next room, the all-black environment is hostile, repellent, and dehumanizing. It expresses directly Nevelson's contempt for human relationships, even art. Judging from the photographs and line drawings of her original shows of this work, it is here that the reworking is most extreme. Originally the tall black altar-like pieces (a series entitled "Sky Cathedrals") were in a "garden" suggestive of a "forest." And while the totems were altars to the dead, they had a religious dimension, implying hope and salvation. In the present arrangement we are brought into a narrow, dark cave, and one feels that the slightest movement in the universe might send its vertical and horizontal planes inward to grind one up; or that one has inadvertently stepped into a forbidden tomb (or womb) and invoked a curse. This is the cave of the Devouring Mother. For this show, Nevelson has deliberately cannibalized her earlier children, so that now we are presented with their skeletal remains fitted into a literal *vagina dentata*.

The third space, the all-white room, is the only one accepting of the human dimension, and it is the only place we are made to feel it is safe to linger. This is "Dawn's Wedding Feast." There is an atmosphere of expectancy: the ritual is in place but it has not yet been enacted. In human terms it suggests great tenderness. It is here in this work that Nevelson took her greatest risk, and the pieces reveal a deliberate exposure of vulnerability. Of this environment, Nevelson says in her autobiography, "It was a kind of wish fulfillment, a transition to a marriage with the world." It is to Nevelson's great credit that, although this event was never fully realized—at a later point in her account she says, "I can say that white is mourning"—she has let this environment stand, as a kind of hope for a historical

event that exists in potentia, the "Dawn" of a truly American Art.

By contrast the gold room is vulgar, resembling a vault where the gold altars (or are they altars to gold?) are kept. One expects a chute to open in the ceiling and gold coin to rain down. This room is entitled "The Royal Tides," suggesting that "The Royal Voyage" is nearing an end, suggesting also the "dusk" of late afternoon, the wages of mature achievement. Instead of marriage to the world, we are given the cave of the Greek Courtesan to whom Zeus came as a shower of gold. "Because the minute you have gold it takes you over. It's splendor. And an abundance. And that abundance is really materialistic." Nevelson's characteristic view of New York is, "Well, for me it is so opulent, rich. It's the richest city in the world...grandeur, grandeur. I think New York is so vital." Once when another artist asked her, "Why do we need signatures?" she replied, "if Rockefeller signs a check for a million dollars, he can get that million dollars. That is the need for a signature." The pieces themselves appear common, like Nevelson's comment, "I was the first person to wear a sixteenth-century Mandarin Chinese robe on top of a blue denim work shirt." The gold laquer is tacky, and makes clear that West 42nd Street at times is the mirror image of West 53rd Street, and vice versa. Here humorlessly, Nevelson's phrase, "It's the total price," is inverted.

The sumptuous, triumphal gold room turns out to be the anteroom to the funeral vault. The final environment, "Mrs. N's Palace," is conceptually right. After death the lady is promoted to the level of Empress, and in death as well as in art she reigns everlastingly supreme. But the scale and the jerry-built construction are closer to a hut. The outside walls are festooned with samples of Nevelson's celebrated reliefs. On one level the construction reminds me of a Maine fisherman's shack, with the tools of his trade hung up outside for everyone to see. On another level, in its intense "blackness," the pieces resemble trophies, and the whole reminds me of Kurtz's hut at the end of Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*. One does not know whether to take the building as a sepulchre or as a reproduction of Nevelson's favorite place for living, her working studio—or both. The interior is tricked out with miniatures of all her favorite icons (a repetition in little, like a child's set, of the figures in the first gallery) that mirror themselves to each other on a floor of black glass. After her excursion into "wishfulfillment" in "Dawn's Wedding Feast," and her revels in materiality in "The Royal Tides," Nevelson's final statement is to make visible the equation latent in her work from the beginning. Art and death are the same. That is their reason for being, and that is all you really need to know—to paraphrase Keats badly. What is disconcerting, however, is the terrible sense of reduction, the diminution in scale. We are suddenly brought down to a frail, human reality.

Does Nevelson wish us to see the show this way? Probably not. But even as theater, it is some good show! It fittingly pulls down the curtain on our first great drama of American Art. It is done in the grand style, too. Like Shakespeare, the corpse is exposed only at the end. Art for Art's Sake is Dead. And ponder the hidden Epilogue: she has not only cleared the ground but even prepared the set for the next drama, the "dawn" of a truly American Art, wedded to the world, to this land, to this continent, which has yet to emerge. ◇

Bill Jacobson is a sculptor, writer, and psychotherapist living in New York. He teaches at The School of Visual Arts.

Note:

Quotations are from Louise Nevelson, Dawns + Dusks (Taped Conversations with Diana MacKown), *New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976.*

Another Look

by Frederick Franck

Picasso: A Retrospective
An exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York City, May 22-September 16, 1980.*

Dominique Bozo, the curator in charge of the future Musée Picasso, describes this Retrospective in the introduction to the opulent catalogue as a "rehearsal" for his "small, ideal museum, devoted to contemplation," and William Rubin, co-architect of the show, says about Picasso's life work that "in its multiplicity of styles, variety, and inventiveness it epitomizes 20th century art as a whole."

Taken together these statements constitute a challenge both to contemplate, and to reflect, on "20th century art as a whole," in the context of the culture of an era of which the Picasso-phenomenon is willy-nilly paradigmal, and to evaluate it afresh.

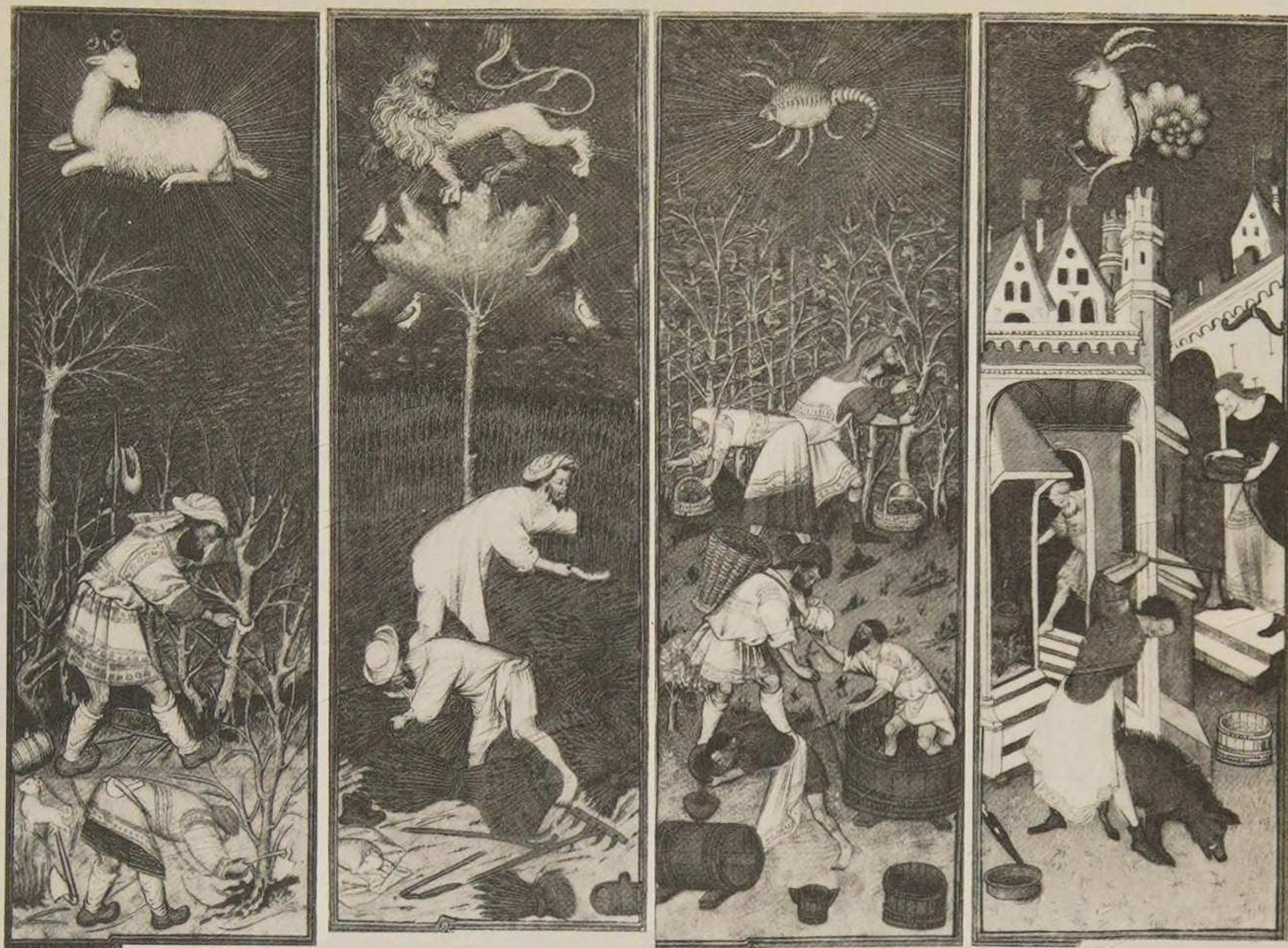
After a first viewing, I found myself assailed by so many questions about this Niagara of images, that a few weeks later I had myself processed once more along these miles of images. How does it affect me, now? How do I come to terms with this prodigiously gifted, overwhelming, autobiographic iconography? I found no answer. The questions multiplied. Whether they are good questions or bad ones is up to the reader; but they are authentic questions for me, often existential ones, not disguised statements!

First question: Who is right, T.S. Eliot, when he writes: "Art is not to express personality, but overcoming it," or Picasso, whose life work is rarely other than the masterful expression of personality as ultra-ego. Would then Eliot deny it the epithet "art"?

Then: does this *oeuvre* show the fulfillment of the promise of a career that started with the astonishing skill and sensitivity of the early drawings of his parents, the male nude of 1895, the magistral "Science and Charity" which the fifteen-year-old boy painted, of that visionary self-portrait of 1901? What has happened, speaking in human terms, to this genius on his journey? How must one understand the course of a life that in its eighties produces erotic drawings—of course superb in their virtuosity—yet no less juvenile, voyeuristic, and obscene than "The Mackerel," drawn sixty years earlier?

Does one detect early signs of a showmanship, as perverse as it is brilliant, in the face of the "Woman in Blue," "The Arlequin" of 1901, in the mannered gesture of the "Woman with a Fan"? Did they foreshadow the black magic of his variations on the theme of Grünewald's Isenheimer Altar, 1932, where Ego plays its purely formalistic games with the sacred icon of the Crucifixion? Are his later variations on themes by Velasquez, LeNain, Coubert, and Delacroix, other than dazzling exercises in

* See PARABOLA, Vol. V, No. 3, for Roger Lipsey's review of the Picasso show.



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Crucifixion, after Grünewald, 1932

violent desacralization? Is his profanation of forms a compulsive, be it cerebrally controlled, tic? Where Grünewald's Crucifixion was intended as an icon of Ultimate Meaning, was Picasso the inventor of entire iconographies of non-meaning, of undiluted *avidya*? Is it this perhaps that makes his art the mirror of an era increasingly dominated by nihilism? Could it be nihilism's destructive "creativity" that compels his radical assault on form as such, for instance in his analytic and synthetic Cubism? Does this nihilization of the visible world perhaps reverse the process of a culture that goes back to Lascaux? Is there an analogy here to the destruction of word-meanings as they became universalized in time and space? By destroying the universals "table" and "guitar," does he not in his Cubist exercises replace them with even less valid, more deviant, more arbitrary hypostatizations, while pretending to touch some core of more essential meanings? "To believe that by merely demolishing concepts...one can rise above them, is to stop at the fringe of the problem," says Whitehead.

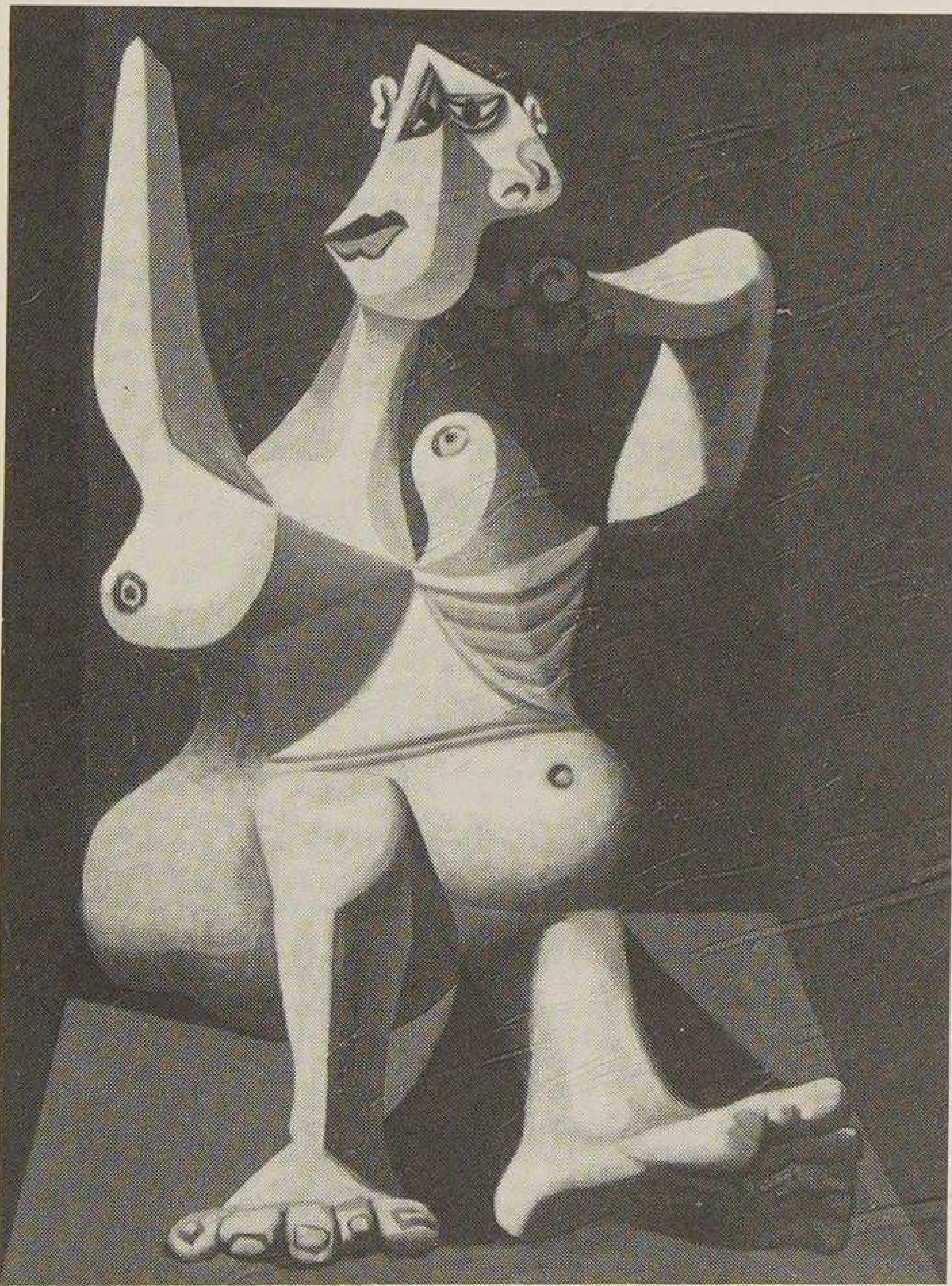
Could, for instance, the "background" of Vuillard's Cubist portrait be gratuitous? Is feeling really the "center of gravity" of the Blue and Rose periods? Try as I may, I am not reminded of El Greco—as the catalogue bids me—in the hollowed cheeks of "The Old Guitarist," "The Blind Man's Meal," 1903: Is El Greco's not a cold flame of ecstatic vision compared to these elegantly mannerist, yet all too violently sentimental tearjerkers? Could Carl Jung be correct in detecting an alienation of feeling in Picasso?

Aragon in 1930 spoke of *"la peinture du défi."* Defiance of what? Of mere bourgeois conventionality? Or could this defiance betray a radical irreverence for, an ego-ridden nihilization of, all creaturely form? The catalogue quotes Gaeton Picon "...seizing hold of whatever is within his reach, ensnaring it with a gesture, with an instant irrepressible cry,...according to the angle of his vision and the mood of the moment..." Did he indeed pounce irrepressibly on any form within reach, human bodies, still life, landscape, according to the momentary, ferocious arbitrariness of a prodigiously inventive ego? Did he fail ever to suspect that the object might, beyond being "object," in itself be totally subject? That it is not an It, but an I, and can only be touched as a Thou? Is it heretical to see, for instance, the Boisgeloup figures, 1932, not as *monstres sacrés,* but as humans reduced to the status of a profane monstrosity, which only the extraordinary virtuosity of a *macho* uninhibited by any vestige of reverence, could conceive? Does he indeed mirror the frightful pathology of the entire era of man-made cataclysms between Flanders' Fields and Hiroshima/Auschwitz, of that progressive de-humanization which would result in human lives becoming as disposable as Kleenex? Standing before the "Guernica" once again, I questioned: "Why have you never really moved me, only astonished me?"

Hadn't Picasso been playing with similarly distorted forms of horse and bull years before the Stukas hit the town of Guernica? Had similar objectivizations, or rather animalizations of the human image not been recurrent constants, explored with obsessive, inexhaustible energy in studies that long preceded the" Guernica"? Again,

is it blasphemous to wonder whether its iconography witnesses less to compassion with human pain, to identification with human suffering, than to that drive to distort phantasmagorically, ever further to assail and destroy the image of the human?

Is it with this "irrepressible cry, according to the mood of the moment" that, throughout his life—and not only on canvas or in bronze—he seized, contorted, violated, twisted with incomparable panache, the faces and bodies of humans—preferably women? Was he perhaps the definitive vitalist? And is not vitalism, even though born as a reaction against those forces in society which suppress and deny life, in perennial danger of spawning the superstition that energy, libido, vitality, and the irrational are in themselves "good" and need only be "liberated" to transform and to fulfill life? What has been the role of the museums in promoting the "creative" destructiveness of this triumphantly nihilistic vitalism in the visual arts?



Woman Dressing Her Hair, 1940

Was there never a moment of quiet humanness in the near-century of this promethean ego? Could it never forget itself in order to be illuminated by things and beings, instead of seizing them in order to convulse or explode their forms? Or were there such moments of stillness after all: in portraits like that of Madam Canals, of Olga, 1923, in the splendid drawing of Vollard, of Satie, of Stravinsky, in that wonderful little aquatint which has the "artist as a child" as its center, and yes, in the sculpture "Man with Sheep"? Is perhaps the exquisite Apollinaire drawing a key to the riddle? For in it the stillness of contemplation seems abruptly broken while drawing the left hand, which at once drops dead, becomes thing, dead weight. Were these then the rare moments in this long life that the giant sat quietly and saw humbly, forgetting his magic show, his castles, his gaggle of women? Why did he so very rarely paint or draw one of these women tenderly, reverentially, humanly, instead of gleefully tearing them to pieces to reassemble them according to "the mood of the moment"?

These are some of the unanswered questions to which one viewer confesses, before the final one: Was Picasso's really "the greatest success story of all time" or did it echo the relentless tolling of the bell of which no one dares to ask for whom it tolls?

Frederick Franck's latest book is The Awakened Eye *(Alfred A. Knopf). He is a Consulting Editor to* PARABOLA.

Leeny Sack, photograph by Ed Robbins

The Performing Garage, New York City, housed two unusual theater pieces this summer. *Gilgamesh*, the legendary cycle of stories surrounding the ancient King of Uruk, was presented by the Shared Forms Theater June 4-22. Though lacking something of the freshness of its first presentation in May 1979 (when the first half was performed), this complete production of the epic continued to reach moments of rhythmic and emotional intensity which provided an experiential passage into the primal, ancient world of man's social and spiritual origins. Movement and performance are molded together through a unique blend of ballet, modern dance, Tai Chi Chuan, and instrumental and vocal studies. The group created a haunting impression of a story told by the slow unwinding of a Sumerian cylinder seal. At a time when the shared experience of community and tradition is noticeably absent, it is encouraging to find a group that has succeeded so well in revealing anew the power and life of one of the oldest works of man.

"You can't so much tell," is a quotation from Leeny Sack's grandmother which is an appropriate epigraph for "The Survivor and the Translator," a solo theater work conceived and performed by Ms. Sack at the Garage. The overwhelming experience of the Holocaust—which can't really ever be *told*—is conveyed in this seemingly minimal piece: three props, two costumes, one performer—with a text that is shattering in its horror, its humor, its compassion without sentimentality. It is a personal work—Sack interviewed her grandparents and parents and others—and "translated" their experiences through her own remarkable equipment: a quick intelligence, a resonating voice speaking in many tongues, a powerful body that can also diminish to the size of a small, frightened child, and an unerring observation of the human condition, not just that of the survivors of the Holocaust. Somehow this "domestication" of experience through Sack's distillation and subsequent intense focus works. Although there is often a feeling that nothing could have helped, Sack's penetration and transformation of the experience is reflected by another statement in the play: "That which doesn't kill me, makes me stronger." Leeny Sack has put herself through the fires, and her emergence benefits all of us.

On September 6, coincident with the month of the Mysteries, Steve Kent, Director of the Los Angeles Provisional Theatre, and Deena Metzger led a workshop at Crete, Athens, Delphi, and Eleusis, in which they attempted to understand the Eleusinian Mysteries as rites of personal transformation.

Their intent was not to redramatize or imitate the Mysteries (the actual rituals of the Mysteries remain the best kept secret of the ancient world) but to recover what they could that is applicable to our current needs, and to conjoin in the spirit and the intent of the Mysteries—the pursuit, within oneself, of a sustaining vision.

In the days of Eleusis, the Mysteries were rites of personal transformation and social cohesion. The hope of this trip was in a modest way to recover both attributes.

COMMENTS

For many reasons, the art of the Pacific cultures has been relatively inaccessible to the Westerner. Finally a book has been published that overcomes one of the primary difficulties: how we see that artwork. *Art of the Pacific* (Harry N. Abrams) reveals the "soul" of this art to the layman. This revelation comes in good part from the extraordinarily rich photographs of New Zealander Brian Brake. In everything from canoe prows to breast pendants the lighting and positioning is unusually sensitive, and the reproduction (done in Japan) is faultless and vastly superior to similar kinds of books at much higher prices. The design of the book must also be mentioned: it is respectful of the objects and inviting to the viewer.

The moving and insightful interviews with local islanders by James McNeish (a new and very successful technique for this type of material in an artbook format), coupled with the fine descriptive notes by David Simmons on the pieces are the perfect complement to the photographs. The interviews reveal a people who are deeply aware of their culture, are tied to it, and are trying to understand its power and their responsibility to it.

In reading *Southwestern Indian Ritual Drama*, edited by Charlotte J. Frisbie (University of New Mexico Press) both scholars and general readers may come to a fuller appreciation of the vast complexity and the intricate beauty of Southwestern Indian ritual drama. This group of writers is distinguished by its dedication to sensitive research. As a consequence, the descriptions amount to a rich sampler of Southwest ritual drama clearly showing the vitality and creativity of Southwest peoples and fostering an appreciation for ritual drama as essential to Native ways of life.

There is much new contained in these papers, and this makes their publication especially welcome. Several of the papers present the first published results of extensive research projects: Barbara Tedlock on Zuni songs and song theories, Charlotte Frisbie on Navajo house blessing ceremonies, Claire Farrer on Mescalero Apache girls' puberty ceremonies, and Leanne Hinton on vocables in Havasupai songs. Also notable is the paper by David McAllester on Navajo Shootingway which gives a first report on some aspects of extensive field research begun more than twenty years ago. The collection is as rewarding in the future research it promises, as for the considerable accomplishments it reports.

Symbolism in Greek Mythology: Human Desire and Its Transformation (Shambhala Books), the first book by French psychologist Paul Diel to be translated into English, offers a study via the depth psychology techniques of Freud and Adler of the psychological reality of classical Greece. The central concern for Diel is the conflict between desire and reality, and he sees an application of the symbologies of classic myth to modern psychology. Introspective techniques are a science for Diel, and they offer us a tool for "translating" human experience.

Gaston Bachelard has written a spirited and eloquent preface to what is an important study in a development of moral values. Although Diel champions a specific methodology of his own making, his respect for the prescience of myth and his own intelligent understanding of the psyche make fascinating and provocative reading.

A new venture, North Point Press, Berkeley, California, will be publishing a number of books that will undoubtedly interest PARABOLA readers. These finely made paper editions include *Birth, An Anthology of Ancient Texts, Songs, Prayers, and Stories*, edited by David Meltzer; *A Part, Poems*, by Wendell Berry; *Watunna, An Orinoco Creation Cycle*, compiled by Marc de Civrieux, translated and edited by David Guss; and *The Divine Woman: Dragon Ladies and Rain Maidens in T'ang Literature*, by Edward H. Schafer.

The Story of the Stone
Volume I "The Golden Days"; Volume II "The Crab-Flower Club"
By Cao Xueqin, translated by David Hawkes. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979. Vol. I, pp. 540, Vol. II, pp. 601. $25.00 each.

The Field of Life and Death/Tales of Hulan River
By Hsiao Hung, translated by Howard Goldblatt and Ellen Young. Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979. Pp. xxvi + 291. $14.95.

Reviewed by Lisa Lowe

Literature celebrates her suffering. As mother or daughter, she is grieving or ill. As the object of desire, she is a picture of physical fragility and emotional distress. Her bound feet are an ornate symbol of her profound capacity to suffer, endure, and obey.

The Chinese woman resides briefly in her father's home for the sole purpose of entering the home of her husband. She marries into a family, and a complex structure of obedience, in which she serves her husband's parents, his older brother and wife, her husband, and then her son. If she marries as a concubine, she embraces subordinance to a first wife, and the first wife's children. If she doesn't marry, she remains forever homeless, nameless; when she dies, her name will not appear on her father's altar.

While this is the traditional picture of the Chinese woman, it reflects one side of a double-faced mirror, and this is its power. One side reflects the order of social relationships and the elaborate codes of behavior which define and position her. The other reflects its inverse, what the structure of authority and obedience represses, what is absent, undetermined, and outside of the structure. Let us say that something escapes, that what is repressed does not disappear, but veers off, joins another, and manifests. This mobility is a power, the ability to be at once both within a structure of dominance and outside of it. Her access to both sides of the mirror is her power to unsettle an overdetermined order. Her pregnancies which disrupt the temporal order, her illnesses and hysterias which break conventional notions of the integrated person, her homelessness and namelessness, her suicides—which can be, in a society that requires submission of the individual, radical statements of resistance—are her power.

In the ethical design of the American family, parents are expected to provide for their children. The Chinese family is somewhat the reverse; duty lies with the son, who is forever in the parents' debt for having been given life. Family interests overshadow his individual interests. Within this orientation, the tradition of arranged marriages is wholly understandable. The son is born into a fixed position within a line of descent, a complex but stable order of seniority. He is defined by a rigid code of behavior. This is strikingly different from Western psychology's conception of the person: separate notions of inside and outside, determined by an individual whose feelings, conflicts, and desires are internalized or externalized. The Confucian man exists within a well-ordered family; he *is* the social virtues—filial piety, brotherliness, righteousness, good faith, loyalty—of which his conduct is an example. "Inside" and "outside" are concepts applied only in reference to the family; one is within a family, or outside of it.

The roles of women within this order mimic the hierarchy of male descent. Eti-

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quette (whom one may address how, what one may say to whom, etc.) and internal rivalries between wives and concubines, between daughters-in-law and mothers-in-law, resemble the male structure.

The eighteenth-century novel of manners, known to most readers as *The Dream of the Red Chamber*, by Tsao Hseuh-Chin, has been translated twice before. The present edition by David Hawkes, *The Story of the Stone*, by Cao Xueqin (Pinyin romanization), renders the tale of the Jia family more fluid and colloquial, more complete in nuance and detail, than the previous translations. This novel is the richest illustration of the Confucian family, and the possible postures of women within that network of manners. Drama which takes place in the precious resonances of gestures—a handkerchief sent or lost, a custard saved for a young maidservant and snatched by the older nanny, an overcoat not worn when it is about to snow—is in marked contrast to the twentieth-century novels of Hsiao Hung, *The Field of Life and Death/Tales of Hulan River*, which graphically depict the lots of urban and village women, the sickness and suffering of birth, old age, and death. Despite contrast of class, epoch, and genre, Hsiao Hung's popular "realist" fiction of the 1930s and the classic novel of a formal literary tradition she and her contemporaries sought to reverse, both works catch reflections from this same double-faced mirror.

The Story of the Stone features a remarkable interplay of dream and reality, and a consistent antinomy between "*zhen*" and

"*jia*," or "real" and "imaginary," which are often posed as two mobile, interdependent realities, as in this couplet:

Jia zuo zhen shi zhen yi jia
Wu wei you chu you huan wu

Truth becomes fiction when the fiction's true
Real becomes not-real when the unreal's real.

The principal romance of the young hero Bao-yu's love for his two cousins, Dai-yu and Bao-chai, provides several situations where the structure of mannered society becomes unsettled. As the three of them are visiting at Bao-chai's apartment, Dai-yu's handmaid rushes in with a handwarmer. Dai-yu becomes angered and scolds her maid, who replies that Nightingale, another maid, had told her to bring it. Dai-yu scoffs that she is glad the maid listens to someone, even if not herself. Bao-yu knows that in chiding the maid, Dai-yu actually has his unsatisfactory attention to her in mind, but he says nothing. Aunt Xue protests, reminding Dai-yu of her bad health. Dai-yu answers:

You don't understand, Auntie. It doesn't matter here with you; but some people might be deeply offended at the sight of one of my maids rushing in with a handwarmer. It's as though I thought my hosts couldn't supply one themselves if I needed it. Instead of saying how thoughtful the maid was, they would put it down to my arrogance and lack of breeding.

In several simple remarks to her maid, Dai-yu has indicted her beloved Bao-yu, has paid tribute to her Aunt, Bao-chai's mother, by modestly proclaiming herself only a "guest," an outsider, and has nobly refused a handwarmer and an opportunity to be more comfortable. This is one example of the "double-face" through which woman may exist exactly within strict codes of behavior, yet avoid and subvert that system by refusing it a singular meaning, by rendering it multiple and diverse. Woman is not simply her assigned role, but also what is repressed and forbidden by that role, as well.

In *The Story of the Stone*, the figure of Granny Liu as a poor village relative of the Jia family represents one example of social ostracism of the woman outside the family order. In *Tales of Hulan River*, the story of a child-bride entering the Hu family is another portrait altogether:

The young child-bride talked in her sleep at night and ran a fever during the day. During the night as she slept she talked only of returning to her home. In the eyes of the girl's mother-in-law the words "return home" were the most disquieting of all...and so she sent for a reader of dreams, whose explanation was just as she had feared: "return home" did, in fact, mean going to the nether world.

Thus, whenever the young child-bride dreamed of being beaten by her mother-in-law, or of being bound and strung up from the rafters of the house, or of being branded on the soles of her feet, or even of having her fingertips pricked with a needle, she began to wail and scream, shouting that she wanted to "return home."

While this story treats the horrifying oppression of one who is outside the family order, we see that oppression is more complex than simply being an outsider. The twelve-year-old girl is regarded with hostility and shamed for her differences; it is, however, the mother-in-law who performs the acts of persecution, driving the girl through madness to death. The child-bride is the obvious victim of social traditions, but the mother-in-law is a victim as well.

The Field of Life and Death records the sufferings of marriage and birth, the poverty and prostitution facing women in the city of Harbin, and echoes these issues of social oppression. Hsiao Hung's novels, like those of other women authors of the 1930s, overturn the narrative tradition that upholds Confucianism. Recognizing what has been overtly denied and repressed in that tradition, these authors naturally discovered the experiences of women as appropriate subject matter in exposing the oppressed elements of society.

There is a late T'ang folk tale titled "The Divided Daughter," translated by Moss Roberts in *Chinese Fairy Tales & Fantasies* (Pantheon Books, 1979) in which two

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lovers of Hengchou, forbidden to marry because of the young woman's previously arranged marriage, elope to Szechwan province. After five years, the woman feels she must pay respects to her parents if she is to "hold up her head in this wide world." Once back in Hengchou, the husband approaches the parents-in-law:

> Wang Chou went alone first to the house of Chang Yi to confess the whole affair. But Chang Yi said, "What kind of crazy talk is this? My daughter has been lying ill in her room for many years."
>
> "But she's in my boat right now," said Wang Chou.
>
> Amazed, Chang Yi sent someone to see if it were true. Indeed Ch'ien Niang was there, with joy on her face and spirit in her expression. The astonished servant rushed back to tell Chang Yi.
>
> When the sick girl in the chamber heard the news, she rose and joyfully put on her jewelry, powdered her face, and dressed in her finest clothes. Then, smiling but not speaking, she went out to welcome the woman from the boat. As they met their two bodies stepped into each other and became one, fitting together perfectly. Yet there was a double suit of clothes on the single body.

Lisa Lowe is a graduate student in semiotics and poetry in the History of Consciousness program at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Mémoire I 1907-1937: Les Promesses de L'Equinoxe. By Mircea Eliade, translated from the Romanian by Constantin N. Grigoresco. Du Monde Entier Series. Paris: Gallimard, 1980. Pp. 455.

Reviewed by Seymour Cain

This initial volume of Eliade's memoirs may have some surprises for those readers who know him only through his writings in the history of religions. Here they will find the boy scientist, journalistic prodigy, adolescent writer of fantastic tales, the lover of girls and women, and the successful novelist, radio-talker, *feuilletoniste*, public lecturer, and university professor in pre-World War II Romania. They will also find him involved in the political currents of that chaotic time and place, though exactly how deeply and with what stance is never quite clear. They may also be surprised to find Eliade—the supposed protagonist of exotic and esoteric depths and heights—deprecating avid and gabby Western seekers for the Absolute and far from approving such indigenous purveyors of Eastern wisdom as Krishnamurti.

Autobiographies, including Rousseau's ostensibly candid *Confessions*, are often suspect among historical and literary scholars as duplicitous exercises in self-justification. But, although Eliade naturally takes his own side in the conflicts with his enemies, he has given us an amazingly frank and apparently honest account of his early life and loves, in which he scarcely appears as a

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hero *sans peur et sans reproche.* He thereby bravely exposes himself to the onslaughts of hostile critics who may wish to make capital of these confessions. He shows himself here not only as a boy genius, but also as a mischievous, disobedient little urchin who bums around town and gets into all kinds of scrapes. And he shows himself in his relations to women as usually more concerned with his own development than with a permanent union, with the glorious exception of his sacrificial decision to mate with the good woman who became his first wife. Yet even this, as he tells it, was more an act of compassionate charity than of wholehearted love.

These memoirs tell the amazing tale of a protean productivity; of a many-sided, Renaissance-scale talent, exercised on both "archaic" and "modern" materials; of a man with a double vocation in literature and scholarship, expressed both in the world of learning and to a much wider public. Starting with his licentiate thesis on the Italian Renaissance thinkers Ficino and Bruno, Eliade went on to immerse himself in Indian studies on their native turf, under the direction of the great Indian scholar Surendranath Dasgupta. A love affair with the savant's daughter while living in his house led to a permanent break with Dasgupta and to Eliade's frenzied journey to the Himalayas, where he sought peace through yoga meditation and techniques. Again, however, even in that rarefied milieu, he fell victim to the temptations of the flesh (this time in the guise of a young lady cellist from South Africa in search of the Absolute), and he realized that he was not cut out for the ascetic life and could not become an Indian holy man, no matter how hard he tried. He concluded that he must return to his own country and work in its culture and fulfill himself first there. "My vocation was culture, not sainthood," he sums up.

Returning to Romania at his father's behest to do his military service, he completed his doctoral dissertation on yoga and entered upon the life of a Bucharest University professor and Romanian man of letters, while attaining international repute for his yoga study. In those first years at home he had an avid, seemingly irrepressible desire to return to India, but that was never to be. He attributes this failure to his famous prize novel, *Maitreyi* (1933), a barely fictionalized account of his love affair with Dasgupta's daughter. He saw its publication as a psychological barrier to his ever returning to India. It may be that there is another and deeper reason for this inhibition against returning to what admittedly was the scene of the most decisive period in his life, which changed his potential career from that of a conventional comparative historian of philosophy to the exceptional historian of religions that he became.

The Indian experience opened up universal aspects of human spirituality for Eliade. The extension of his studies beyond the classical texts he read with Dasgupta to popular Indian religion and Tantric yoga brought him two decisive insights, which he was to develop throughout his later career. First was the realization that the age-old peasant culture of India shared in universal patterns of experiencing and mythifying reality that were common to peasant cultures throughout the world. Hence, he could understand his own Romanian peasant culture through having known Indian folk culture, and could go on to understanding all folk cultures since the neolithic agricultural revolution.

Second was the perception that for this type of Indian religious experience and expression, value and meaning were to be found in life and action in the everyday world, in incarnate existence, which was not to be passed over and disvalued in favor of some abstract Absolute, as in the Vedanta so well known and often admired by Westerners. Out of this realization was to come Eliade's later salient assertion of the "unrecognizability of miracle," of the "camouflage" of the sacred in the profane, of the presence of ultimate reality and value in the apparently banal everyday. This too was to be a universal principle in Eliade's interpretation of religion, and it was to energize many of his literary writings, e.g.,

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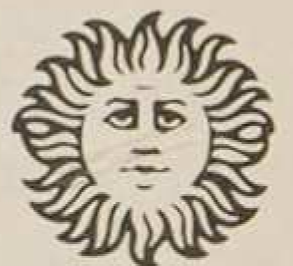
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his major novel, *Forbidden Forest*, and such fantastic tales as "With the Gypsy Girls."

Of course, this kind of grand generalization has aroused the criticism of scholars who prefer a more cautious, empirical approach. Others, however, have seen such large, daring ideas as providing a needed imaginative impulse for meaningful religio-historical studies. For Eliade, it should be noted, the history of religions is no mere academic enterprise, but a means, indeed the only one, for lifting modern man out of the slough of a life without the sense of the sacred. It too is a "camouflage"; salvific, transformative action in the guise of an academic discipline.

This volume ends with Eliade at thirty, a brilliant young scholar and writer, who has just survived a maliciously inspired pornography trial, with twelve books to his credit and many more in the offing. He sees these volumes and those to come as constituting an *oeuvre*, a work that can be understood and judged only when it is seen or foreseen in its entirety. This total work, note well, includes both his fiction and his scholarship. He believed at thirty that he needed only a few more volumes to make the main lines of his *oeuvre* clear, but he sensed that time was running out for his

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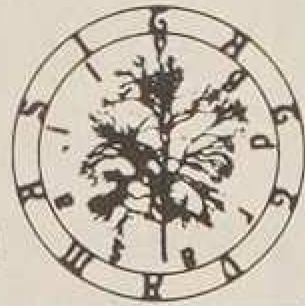


generation of Romanians and that a restrictive, uncreative period was coming. Indeed, just a year later King Carol was to set up his Royal Dictatorship, and soon thereafter Romania was to become a partner of Nazi Germany and engage in a traumatic war with the Soviet Union. These matters and Eliade's permanent exile in France and the United States will no doubt be recounted in Volume II.

Harper & Row (San Francisco) will publish Mac Linscott Ricketts' English translation of Volume I.

Seymour Cain, Senior Editor for Religion and Philosophy in the making of the fifteenth edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica, *was a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow 1979-80, and is the author of* Gabriel Marcel. *He is presently engaged in a work on Eliade's life, work, and thought.*

Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts

By Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980. Pp. xviii + 382. $27.50.

Reviewed by Indira V. Peterson

As its enigmatic title suggests, *Women, Androgynes, and Other Mythical Beasts* is more than a modern bestiary. It is a brilliant analytical study of conceptions of human sexuality as they are revealed—especially through animal symbolism—in Hindu mythology, and of the ways in which these conceptions are related to Indian cultural realities.

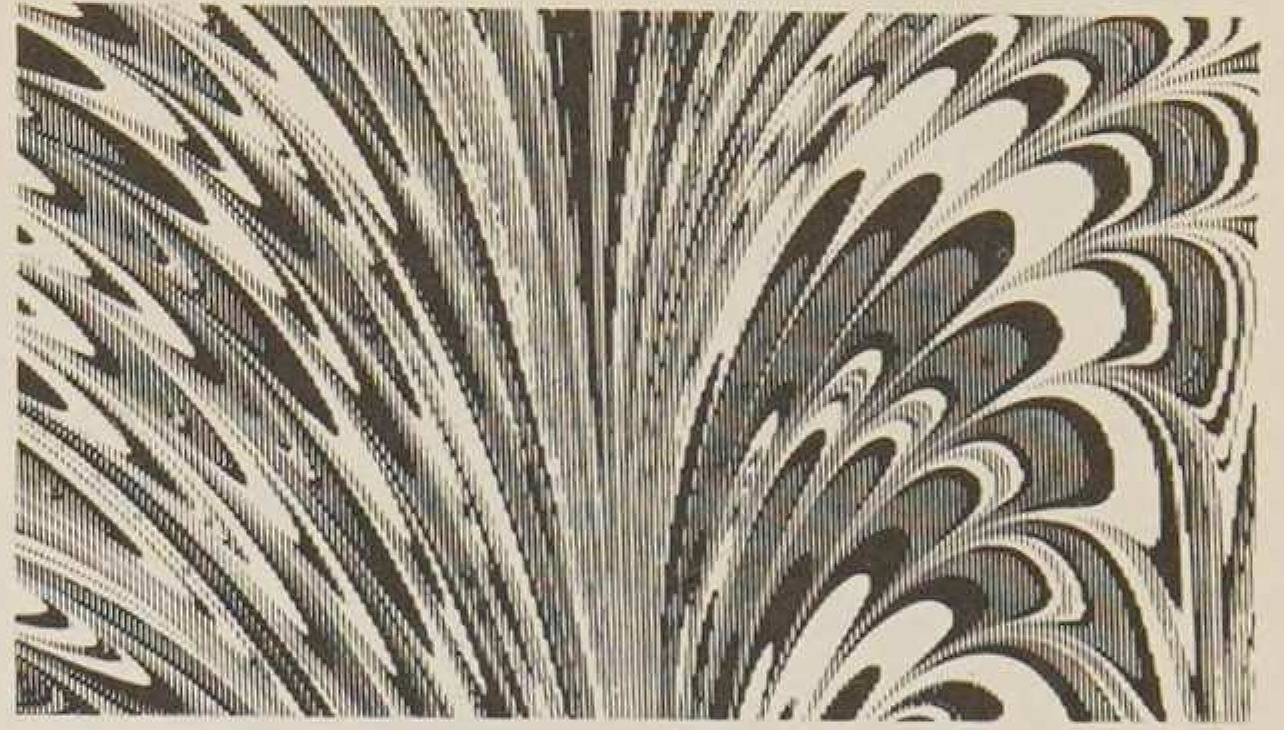
In *Women, Androgynes...* we learn about such varied mythological phenomena as mare-headed nymphs, sacrificial stallions, androgynes, and the relationships between several types of males and females—gods and their consorts, gods and mortal women, goddesses and male devotees. In the complex yet coherent argument that runs through her exposition of these subjects, Dr. Wendy O'Flaherty, a well-known Indologist, convinces us that they fit together to complete the jigsaw puzzle of Hindu sexual politics.

Dr. O'Flaherty suggests that the logic of sexual relations as depicted in Hindu mythology is based on the idea that sexual energy is equivalent to vitality, the life-force in men. In this view, when man conserves or increases his power (*śakti*) in the form of sexual energy, he is on his way to immortality; conversely, the loss of sexual *śakti* leads him to death/destruction. In the following two paragraphs I shall summarize—alas, in a somewhat simplified form—Dr. O'Flaherty's analysis of, and insights into, the many ways in which the above theme is worked out in Hindu myths. The reader must bear in mind that, as the author notes, what we encounter is a primarily *male* point of view, expressed in the religious-mythological texts of a culture in which men alone have religious authority.

Given the idea that vital power resides in sexual fluids such as semen, sexual intercourse is seen as a transfer of power, where power literally flows from one sex to the other. Since this is a male point of view, all is well only when the male has the advan-

tage, i.e., *gains* in sexual energy, but Hindu (again, *male*) conceptions of the feminine pose formidable obstacles to this desired outcome. First of all, though both men and women possess power (as sexual fluids), power (*śakti*) is itself a feminine concept, symbolic of the female. Again, the man is seen as being drained of fluid energy in intercourse, and so it is better for him to practice abstinence through asceticism or yoga, thus accumulating vital power. Woman, on the other hand, has more than one sexual fluid ("female semen," milk, uterine/menstrual blood); her loss is not equal to that of the man. And to boot, she has an insatiable sexual appetite "by nature" and thrives on the energy she continually draws from the man.

The Hindu Tantric cults suggest a way in which men may amass power through sex: through ritual union with the "Goddess" the male devotee can draw energy *from* the female, even become immortal. However, even the Tantric way is not a real solution to the Hindu male's problems, for the effect of sexual union (vitalizing vs. weakening) is not under his control, but depends on the nature of the female with whom he unites. Woman can be purely erotic, and thus dangerous to the man, or fertile but non-erotic, therefore "safe," even beneficent to him: she can also oscillate between these two types. The Goddess is the divine counterpart of the Hindu woman. The Goddess-woman is symbolized by the mare in her erotic, energy-sapping, destructive aspect, and by the cow in her positively maternal, life-sustaining one. The myths articulate the tensions that result from the mating of the male with the many permutation-combinations of the erotic-fertile-mother-whore. The scenario is further complicated by Hindu beliefs about male-female relationships within the family and between human and divine beings. Seen in this context, the androgyne—as represented in the androgynous form of the god Shiva which is usually considered to be a symbol of the perfect, harmonious union of



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male and female—can be equally symbolic of the eternal struggle, the see-saw balance of power between the sexes. In all this, myth and cultural norms continually influence and reinforce each other.

Several Indologists have pointed out the connection between sexuality, power, and the feminine in specific Indian contexts. But Dr. O'Flaherty is the first scholar to have thoroughly explored, through the study of myth, the full implications of this connection for Hindu culture as a whole; and none has handled the topic with greater elegance and insight. *Women, Androgynes...* is a book of many firsts. The chapters on sexual fluids and androgynes are brilliant, pioneering essays on these phenomena. The chapter devoted to the Indo-European mare is a comparative mythologist's delight. Here Dr. O'Flaherty skillfully draws together myths involving horses in various Indo-European cultures, (especially Irish and Welsh) and the Indian instance of horse-symbolism, the firemouthed oceanic mare and the stallion of the *aśvamedha* horse-sacri-

fice. Again, she is the first to bring out the importance of the mare as female symbol in the Hindu tradition, thus balancing the notion that the cow is the sole symbol of the feminine in India.

Women, Androgynes...is an eminently readable book characterized by Dr. O'Flaherty's clear argument and lucid prose. At the same time, despite the author's claim that it is a "literary love-child" rather than a scholarly work, it is a model of scholarship. With great sophistication, Dr. O'Flaherty has put together a vast network of "evidence" in support of her thesis, drawing from wide-ranging textual sources of Hindu myth (mainly the Sanskrit Veda, epics and *Purāṇas*) translated by herself, and from scholarly work in several disciplines —mythology, the history of religions, psychoanalysis, anthropology. Not the least among the pleasures of this book is the *Introduction* in which the author defends her eclectic approach. This method, which she calls "pluralistic" and "toolbox," has yielded a very interesting book which will have a far-reaching impact on Indology, comparative mythology, and the study of religion. A fine example of how to study mythology, it is a must on the reading list of every mythophile.

Indira V. Peterson is a specialist in Sanskrit and Indian literature. She has taught in the Five-College Consortium in Western Massachusetts and currently holds an NEH fellowship for the study of Tamil religious song-texts.

Lost Christianity
By Jacob Needleman. New York: Doubleday, 1980. Pp. 240. $9.95.

Reviewed by John Loudon

Lost Christianity is a stimulating and perplexing book, surely Jacob Needleman's most distinctive work yet. Because the issues it raises are many and complex, this review can be no more than an early scouting report.

Some years ago Needleman started to do a book on ways Christians have been rediscovering the vital dimensions of their own heritage. But he discovered that what he was seeking went beyond the various aspects of renewal taking place in mainstream Christianity—the new interest in mysticism and spirituality, the opening to Eastern religions, the concern for techniques of prayer and meditation, the attempts at liturgical and monastic reform—although these changes evidenced a hunger among serious Christians for a more experiential, genuinely transforming way. What really needed to be recovered, and what Needleman was looking for, was Christianity's lost esoteric tradition: "the Christianity that works, that actually produces real change in human nature, real transformation." This account of his search is, in several respects, Needleman's own *Meetings with Remarkable Men.* He describes with telling detail yet tantalizing economy his important encounters with Metropolitan Anthony Bloom, head of the Russian Church in Western Europe, with an unconventional Catholic missionary named Father Vincent, and with Father Sylvan, an enigmatic but "remarkable 'Christian monk.'" And he weaves into his expository tale briefer reports of meetings with monks at an experimental Cistercian abbey, a testing pilgrimage to Mt. Athos, and the work of religious thinkers like Thomas Merton, Aelred Graham, and William Johnston in bringing Eastern techniques and wisdom, especially Zen, to bear on the practice of contemplative Christianity.

The soul of the book, however, is Needleman's don Juan, Father Sylvan. Just as Castaneda ran into don Juan in an Arizona bus station, Needleman met his Father Sylvan in the Bangkok airport. He describes Sylvan as a monk of a "very old" Middle Eastern order who had about him a remarkable presence. They discovered a common concern for finding "the heart of Christianity" and talked for hours waiting for a delayed plane and then on their flight to Tokyo, where they departed without Needleman learning much about him or even how to get in touch with him again. On returning home Needleman abandoned his idea of writing on Christianity as much

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too difficult, despite being more than ever convinced—after meeting Sylvan—that the hidden tradition of Christianity he was seeking did exist. Then a year later, out of the blue, he received from Egypt a manuscript with a cryptic unsigned note saying that Father Sylvan had died a month before and left "these papers to be disposed of by being forwarded to you." After carefully digesting the manuscript's ideas, he decided that, despite their radical unorthodoxy, they could "revolutionize the modern understanding of the Christian religion." While the book shuttles back and forth between the presentation of Father Sylvan's ideas and the accounts of Needleman's meetings with various other Christians, its substance consists in the exposition of the ideas presented in the manuscript.

Although Needleman quotes large chunks of Sylvan's writings and organized his presentation of the ideas into thematic clusters, the articulation of the elements of esoteric Christianity remains, intentionally, fragmentary and elusive. Hence, it is difficult, even somewhat improper, to sum up neatly what "lost Christianity" involves. Still, something needs to be said, and there are some recurrent themes, developed mostly in Needleman's analysis of the import of his encounters and in the quotations from the manuscript and his interpretive comments on it. Needleman contends that there are two principal traditions in Christianity as in the other great religions—one orthodox, exoteric, offering salvation through faithful allegiance; the other often viewed as heretical, esoteric, inner, handed on orally, holding that authentic Christian living comes only with the attainment of conscious knowledge (*gnosis*) of oneself and reality and with real inner development—and that these two streams of teaching, more importantly, exist potentially within each of us. The esoteric stream offers ideas, practices (physical, psychological, spiritual), and methods of living that promote the awakening of the inner self from the ordinary human state of waking sleep, the freeing of one's potential being from the automatic responses of our senses, emotions, thought. Central is the idea that the soul must be developed, created, that the world of human existence is, in Keats' phrase, "the vale of Soul-making": "'Lost Christianity' is the forgotten power of man to extract the pure energy of the soul from the experiences that make up his life." Without this "inner work," without a higher level of "attention" to what makes us do what we do, we cannot respond to the high challenge of the teachings of Christianity. Real Christian living—real morality, faith and love, service and sacrifice—is thus beyond most of those who think of themselves as Christians, because most have never been taught, never learned, this "intermediate Christianity" of soul-development, as Father Sylvan calls it, that makes a genuine reponse to Christian teaching possible. And this "intermediate Christianity" only comes as we awaken to the automatism of our life, our language, even our beliefs and undertake a conscious search for what truly develops our soul.

As Needleman readily acknowledges, these ideas, this view of esoteric Christianity, are very much in line with the teaching brought by Gurdjieff, a teaching that Gurdjieff himself identified with esoteric Christianity. It seems then that Needleman has found at least in Father Sylvan living proof of the existence of the esoteric Christian tradition that is consistent with Gurdjieff's teaching and claim, a system or way of working with which Needleman had explicitly allied himself long before he set out on his specific quest for lost Christianity. And it is at the point late in the book when Father Sylvan in his quoted manuscript not only demonstrates considerable familiarity and sympathy with "the Gurdjieff ideas" (as Needleman calls them) but refers to "the sacred language of Gurdjieff," that *I* started to wake up and to see the book with new eyes. I began to ask just who this character Father Sylvan really was (is), and as I read the book afresh I gradually became convinced that Father Sylvan is Needleman's own literary creation, or more precisely perhaps a symbol or cipher of his own inner teacher. In this new light, the whole book began to make more and more sense as a teaching story created out of fact and fiction (certainly Bloom, Johnston, et al. exist, and there is no real reason to think that Needleman would have "made up" Father Vincent or even that Father

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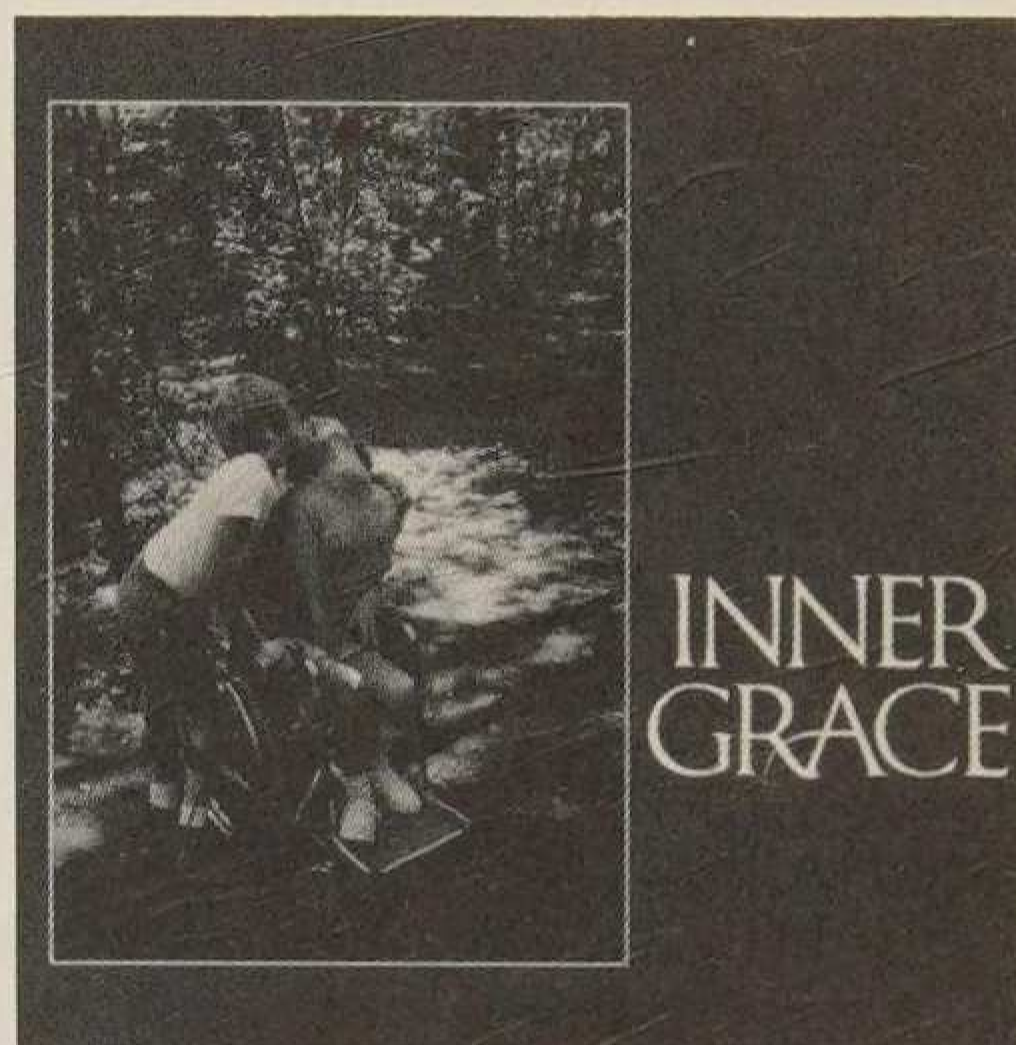

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Sylvan might not be based on someone that he actually met), and it took on a new level of interest and meaning.

I cannot muster here all the evidence that led me to my view of "Father Sylvan," nor of course have I been able (or seriously inclined) to do elaborate external research into the matter à la the De Mille investigations of Castaneda's work, although it would be tempting to ask Needleman some pointed questions, to talk to the New Testament professors who supposedly read Father Sylvan's manuscript at his request and found it unsubstantiated, "warmed-over Gnosticism," even to check flight records, etc. Such detective work seems ultimately beside the point. What matters is for each reader to respond to Needleman's book as it is, and that response, as I think Needleman would readily agree, will tell a lot about a reader's openness to "lost Christianity." All the same, it is worth indicating some of the features of the book that led me to doubt Father Sylvan's existence. First, what might be called the external evidence. Unlike the other figures in the book and in spite of his central importance, the facts about Father Sylvan's life are so vague as to be non-existent: Needleman doesn't tell us what he looked like (whereas we get detailed descriptions of Bloom and Father Vincent); he is identified as a Middle Eastern monk, but we can't find out what "very old" order or monastery he belonged to, and his accent is unidentifiable; he flies around the world (diary entries in the manuscript are datelined Tokyo, Tehran, Washington), apparently had participated in many cultures, and attends religious conferences, but we never learn in what capacity or to what purpose, nor did anybody in Needleman's wide range of contacts seem to know him, nor did he publish anything (despite his remarkably wide-ranging knowledge). He chooses to write a whole diary-like manuscript in "broken English" (all for the benefit of a man he met only once?), and conveniently dies before anything can be found out about him, leaving with Needleman an untraceable manuscript. A very esoteric man indeed.

"Man is asleep when he dies he wakes up."

Prophet Mohammad (S.A.W.)

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Then, there appears to me to be curious discrepancies about dates in the book. Sylvan's diary indicates that he met Needleman in December, 1975, and Needleman says he received the manuscript nearly a year later (= late 1976). But when Needleman meets Bloom in 1977, he regrets that he had not then known about Father Sylvan's teachings. Again, near the end of the book, Needleman comments that Sylvan's manuscript demonstrates a remarkable knowledge of contemporary scholarship on Gnosticism, including the work of James Robinson. But *The Nag Hammadi Library in English*, of which Robinson was general editor, was not published until 1978, and I do not think that the translation of "The Gospel of Philip" included therein, which Father Sylvan quotes in his manuscript, was available to the public before then. (Perhaps these anomalies are intentional clues for the wary.) Then there is the internal evidence, which I can just outline here. As indicated, Father Sylvan evidences familiarity with Gurdjieffian ideas most unusual for any monk (indeed the sort of knowledge that Needleman himself possesses), and on the other hand for a serious Christian "theologian" he makes remarkably little reference to the New Testament and to cardinal themes of Christian theology, such as grace and redemption. Moreover, both the substance and the expression of his ideas bear striking resemblance to Needleman's own way of thinking and talking about these issues.

But if Father Sylvan and his manuscript are Needleman's invention, two crucial questions arise: what, then, are the real nature and purpose of the book, and is the lost Christianity he presents really Christianity? Clearly, on my reading, *Lost Christianity* is a quite cunning *tour de force* on Needleman's part, and more significantly, it has been designed in a way that would lead readers to undertake the kind of search that must occur if one is really to find lost Christianity for oneself. If one experiences the shock of disenchantment in discovering that Father Sylvan did not exist "out there" in the "real world," then one may realize that real seeking is not (or not ultimately) a matter of running around the world trying to find living exponents of the esoteric tradition, but rather what Needleman himself says his book is about—an inner search to come to know the esoteric dimension of one's own self. As Father Sylvan says in his manuscript: "[Y]ou must learn *how* to seek. The whole of our teaching is in that: the knowledge of how to search." And Needleman explicitly states: "[T]his book represents the thoughts and observations of only one, very limited, observer," and it has been written "specifically so as to portray and perhaps even reproduce in the reader, something of the feeling and the sense of weight that these lost ideas have.... it is the mode of cognizing the ideas that is lost, quite as much as the ideas themselves." Finally, the book concludes with these sentences: "The lost element in our lives is the force within myself that can attend to both movements of human nature [creation and return, outer and inner] within my own being and can then guide the arising of this force within my neighbor in a manner suited to his understanding. To communicate that idea has been the single aim of this book."

The most difficult question, though, is whether the teaching communicated is authentically Christian. It all depends, of course, on your point of view; ultimately individual readers will have to decide for themselves, and that process will itself be one of the energizing benefits of the book. If, however, Father Sylvan is a fictional creation, it seems that in his outer search Needleman did not really find any Christian "out there" who is an explicit exponent of the esoteric tradition of Christianity, for everything that the various remarkable men say (including Bloom and Vincent, his other prime candidates) can readily be interpreted in ways that are within the ambit of more or less "conventional" Christianity. Still, the point can be that this lost Christianity can exist potentially in each of us, and once discovered can be discerned in others, so that we have to think about the teaching as it is presented. One immediately striking thing, as I noted above, is that it is virtually devoid of references to the New Testament, and specifically, to the words and deeds of Jesus. Sylvan also admits that almost none of the theologians and spiritual teachers in recorded Christian history speak, for instance, of the development of the soul in the way that he does, and even the quotations from mostly obscure Church Fathers and medieval theologians need not be interpreted as Sylvan or Needleman read them. Moreover, the basic idea that one cannot respond to the teachings of Christianity without first attaining an advanced level of self-attention, of psychophysical development that few reach seems to run counter to both fundamental New Testament teaching and the actual experience of real Christians that I've known and that I've read about. I think that Needleman's version of true Christianity is too one-dimensional, insufficiently "catholic": it misses the central Christian paradox of being and becoming, grace and freedom—that though we are created to become fully what we potentially are, we are loved and accepted by a gracious God for what we are despite our failure to realize our full potential and that it is precisely by dying to the illusion of autonomous self-creation that we can become fully alive to our potential for self-giving and self-transcendence. It misses too the essential generosity of the Gospel message that is addressed to all people at every level—from fishermen and prostitutes to tax collectors and intelligentsia; it makes complex and forbidding what only some of us need find so complicated. What may be more true to Christianity is to think in terms of there being a variety of Christian ways, or yogas, and that each Christian, according to temperament, circumstances, gifts, etc., is called to follow one of these ways more than others. In this view, there would be room in authentic Christianity for those of more simple faith and charity and hope as well as those whose makeup and experience demand the development of certain capacities, including those that Needleman stresses, in order to respond wholeheartedly to the Christian challenge. *(Reviewed from advance uncorrected proofs).*

John Loudon is a Contributing Editor to PARABOLA.

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Unspoken Worlds: Women's Religious Lives in Non-Western Cultures
By Nancy A. Falk and Rita M. Gross, eds. New York: Harper & Row, 1980. Pp. xviii + 292. Paper $5.95.

Changing of the Gods: Feminism and the End of Traditional Religions
By Naomi R. Goldenberg. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979. Pp. viii + 152. $9.95, paper $4.95.

Ancient Mirrors of Womanhood: Our Goddess and Heroine Heritage
By Merlin Stone. New York: New Sibylline Books, 1979. Pp. 212. Paper $6.95.

Reviewed by Carol Ascher

In vital periods of rapid change, one movement easily absorbs the insights of another, and even if the two are not fused, each is enriched. This has been the case for the renewal of interest in spirituality and the current wave of feminism. Women and men in religion departments, theological schools, and meditation centers have looked at their texts and practice with a new concern for the meaning and role given to women, just as activists in the women's movement have begun to question the limits of a rational world devoid of spiritual meaning. And from both groups, there has been a sadness for history and meaning lost, particularly when it came to women, and an urgency to retrieve what might remain or, if that fails, to invent.

The Changing of the Gods and *Unspoken Worlds* are by women who discovered the underrepresentation of women figures and feminine imagery in most religious traditions during their studies as graduate students in religion; and while Goldenberg argues that one can't "rectify the balance" in the Judeo-Christian tradition, since it would change the tradition beyond recognition, Falk and Gross seek through a collection of essays by anthropologists as well as religion scholars to fill in the gaps of information on women's role and practices in non-Western religions. *Ancient Mirrors*, by contrast, is the work of a sculptor and art historian, and seems to have as its impetus the reassembling and restoring of "the many broken and shrunken pieces" of myths and images which women may want to use today.

I very much admired Merlin Stone's last book, *When God was a Woman*, the product of years spent unearthing the feminine imagery in archaeological remains, largely in the Middle East. Though not documented by traditional standards, the book's tight arguments made it a real delight. *Ancient Mirrors*, which is to have a sequel in the near future, gathers poetry, fragments, stories, and myths from Oceania to the Amazon. There is a lovely Chinese tale about how the girl, Gum Lin, saved her village from drought through the aid of Loy Yi Lung, the daughter of a dragon; a beautiful Zulu story about the Rain Goddess taking a mate; or amazing Celtic tales of goddesses besting mortal men—"on the battlefield or on the bed." But the work is of uneven literary quality. And in some cases, Stone has apparently embellished or invented from mere hints and fragments—without telling the reader when or how the piece produced relates to her original source—which makes it unsatisfying as scholarship. Perhaps Volume II, which is to have an extensive bibliography, will be an aid to those interested in following up Stone's leads, but I'm not sure it will be able to resolve one's uneasy feeling. The book is clearly intended as inspiration, but for those who need their inspiration based either on tighter rules of evidence or more carefully wrought literature, the book will not be a wholly satisfying experience.

Naomi Goldenberg's *Changing of the Gods* is, by contrast, for the most part a careful argument. Drawing heavily on Jungian psychology, Goldenberg argues that changing the imagery of Judaism and Christianity from male to female will lead from an external God to images of the God that lies within. This esoteric notion, she feels, is in direct opposition to the dominant strands of the traditions as we know them. Goldenberg actually pays little attention to the mystical tradition within either Judaism or

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Christianity—which strengthens her case at the expense of the full picture. The last section of her book takes a surprising but fascinating turn in direction: it is a description of witchcraft as it is being practiced by women and men around the country today, and Goldenberg apparently believes that witchcraft in the cults she studied exemplifies a spiritual practice with women both in leadership roles and at the core of the spiritual imagery.

Falk's and Gross' *Unspoken Worlds* is, to me, the most fascinating of the three books—although it gains by being read in the context of the other two. The book includes short monographs on the rituals of Hindu, Islamic, and Buddhist women in India and Iran, showing that while women's religious practice has been all but ignored by scholars, they do, in fact, have rich, and often satisfying religious lives. There are also fascinating essays on a contemporary Indian female guru; on women in Tantric Buddhism of Medieval India and Tibet; on women in the Dionysic cults of ancient Greece; and on the Empress Wu, who rose to rule in seventh-century China using both Confucianism and Buddhism to justify her unique place, and whose period of rule represented one of the great flowerings of Chinese Buddhist culture. Essays on the rites of women in the Iroquois Nation, the Black Caribe, and Australian aboriginal culture round out the picture by providing information on lesser known traditions. Some of the essays are a bit too sociological for my taste, formulating women's religious experience too much in terms of their position in the family and the community. I much prefer those articles which convey the magic and mystery of the women's religious experiences and, as in the case of the Indian guru, of the individual women. In spite of these reservations, *Unspoken Worlds* provides an enormous service. While retriev-

ing some of the losses of women's religious history, it enriches the images of the traditions for all those involved in that quest.

I think we are just beginning to see the richness promised by interaction of the two movements. There is still much to be unearthed, studied, and recreated, and the coming years will see an enhancement of both views.

Carol Ascher is a free-lance writer with a background in anthropology. She has recently completed a novel, Reparations, *and is currently writing a book on Simone de Beauvoir for Beacon Press.*

The Real Work: Interviews & Talks 1964-1979

By Gary Snyder. New York: New Directions, 1980. Pp. 189. $10.95, paper $4.95.

Reviewed by Norman Weinstein

The issue of what constitutes a poet's real work has been a perplexing and largely unanswered query thoughout our age. The totalitarian notion of the poet marshalling lyric language to praise the centralized State has met with armed resistance. Shelly's quaint concept of the poet as an "unacknowledged legislator" appears ironic given the number of poets who feel powerless to alter their country's political future. Gary Snyder reaches back in time—40,000 years to be exact—to discover his sense of the poet's function in the broad human community. His current book of talks completes the trajectory of thought declared on the back cover of his last prose collection, *Earth House Hold*:

> As a poet I hold the most archaic values on earth. They go back to the late Paleolithic; the fertility of the soil, the magic of animals, the power-vision in solitude, the terrifying initiation and rebirth; the love and ecstasy of the dance, the common work of the tribe.

A functional identity is formed between the modern poet and the traditional shaman. By linking the poet's role with that of a spiritual healer Snyder bypasses academic definitions of the poet in favor of anthropological and sociological ones. Concretely, Snyder envisions the poet as an essential worker within any community network supplying personal and communal guidance through the creation of new songs.

The Real Work, a sprawling assortment of interviews and brief prose statements from the last fifteen years, expands and refines this basic vision. Snyder places a heavy emphasis in several talks upon the poet rooting himself in whatever territory he or she identifies as home. This sense of rootedness imples for Snyder developing a comprehensive knowledge of all forms of nature indigenous to one's bioregion. Further, Snyder emphasizes the importance of gaining knowledge of how the first non-white inhabitants lived in harmony and survived in that particular territory. Through such insights the poet can rightfully assume the role of "spokesman for wild nature," the voice of wild grasses and undomesticated animals, a role reminiscent of a shaman's receiving guidance from a totem animal.

But Snyder is well aware of the difficulties facing modern Americans who would wish to encounter the natural world sensitively. Nature appears to us in veiled form. We are accustomed to imposing our wills upon its forms rather than being its student. Snyder suggests that an intensive encounter with the nature of our own consciousness through meditation might enable us to perceive the natural world with less interference and more lucidity. He suggests that the careful examination of the oral and written myths and tales from a region, all of which are collected in our collective unconscious, will heighten our ability to live harmoniously on earth. And the poet doesn't merely collect past mythologies; he or she constantly recreates the old symbols and recasts old myths:

> Poetry effects change by fiddling with the archetypes and getting at people's dreams about a century before it actually effects historical change. A poet would be, in terms of the ecology of symbols, noting the main structural connections and seeing which parts of the symbol system are no longer useful or applicable, though everyone is giving them credence. And out of his own vision and hearing of voices he seeks for new paths for mind-energy to flow.

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Snyder's poetic and spiritual education, details of which are interspersed throughout these talks, makes him a uniquely qualified "archetype-fiddler." His background academically encompasses anthropological studies of Northwestern Native American tribes and several oriental languages. His spiritual education came from years of training as a Zen monk in a Japanese Rinzai Monastery. As if to consciously counter the cultural stereotype of the poet as a personality comfortable only in the etherealized climes of academia or monastery, Snyder offers his range of work experiences from the past two decades: logging, construction, merchant marine work. How the work rhythms associated with each of these occupations informed his poetry makes fascinating reading.

Captivated as I am by Snyder's vision of a poet's real work, I find myself harboring a serious reservation. In response to a penetrating question by Colin Kowal about the difficulties of doing "real work" within the fabric of a corrupt economic system Snyder responds:

> But we feel bad because we find ourselves doing things which are implicitly valid but are hooked up somehow to the economic growth system which is out of control. At least if you are aware of it, it helps.

How that awareness helps is never dealt with. And that very problem of translating one's spiritual desire to practice a right livelihood within the shell of a materialistic society goes to the heart of the poet as shaman issue. A traditional shaman in a primitive society is never faced with the dilemma of having to choose another vocation in order to economically survive, let alone an occupation that might contradict the meaning of his sacred vocation. Even in the unlikely event that current American society should relieve poets of this economic problem, how many poets would willingly choose to take upon themselves the enormous social responsibility of healing community members? Clearly, the translation of the shaman role into the poet is an ongoing task, perhaps ultimately an impossible transformation until the entire foundation of this society shifts. Snyder can certainly be accused of impracticality.

Nevertheless, it is easy to see Snyder's place in a long line of "impractical" visionaries like Emerson and Thoreau, those for whom poetry contained the cipher that would forge the needed link between human nature and nature at large.

Norman Weinstein is a free-lance writer who lives in Oregon and writes poetry and criticism. He is presently working on a book on the American surrealist painter, Dorothea Tanning.

A Soldier's Embrace
By Nadine Gordimer. New York: Viking Press, 1980. Pp. 144. $8.95.
The Marriage Between Zones Three, Four, and Five (Canopus in Argos: Archives, Volume 2)
By Doris Lessing. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1980. Pp. 245. $10.00.

Reviewed by Rob Baker

> Writers brought up in Africa have many advantages—being at the centre of a modern battlefield; part of a society in rapid, dramatic change. But in a long run it can also be a handicap: to wake up every morning with one's eyes on a fresh evidence of inhumanity; to be reminded twenty times a day of injustice, and always the same brand of it, can be limiting. There are other things in living besides injustice, even for the victims of it.
>
> —Doris Lessing, *African Stories*

Both Nadine Gordimer and Doris Lessing grew up as members of the ruling white minority in predominantly black south African states. Both became writers of great depth and sensitivity, chronicling the racial strife that has torn apart those countries (Rhodesia for Lessing, South Africa for Gordimer). Both aligned themselves adamantly against injustice, but neither opted for a simplistic, starry-eyed-liberal "explanation" of that injustice. Instead both found in Africa a metaphor for the chaos throughout contemporary society—a complex interplay of opposites (black/white, rich/

"... the gods of the Oglalas would be more pleased if the holy men told of them so that they might be kept in remembrance and all the world might know of them."—*George Sword.*

LAKOTA BELIEF AND RITUAL

By JAMES R. WALKER

Edited by RAYMOND J. DeMALLIE and ELAINE A. JAHNER

This volume, the first of four on Lakota life, makes available for the first time the interviews and texts collected by Walker on the Pine Ridge Reservation between 1896 and 1914. Sworn to secrecy as long as the holy men lived, Walker was unable to publish most of the documents on which his studies were founded, and many of those included here have only recently become available.

● Part I reviews Walker's life and work and includes his autobiographical account of becoming an Oglala medicine man.

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poor, "civilized"/"primitive") which they, as women in a men's world (socially, politically, even to a large extent artistically) were able to elaborate even further, making it even more resonant a symbol.

As their writing grew to a rich maturity, Gordimer and Lessing were to follow increasingly different paths in their art. Their most recent works, a collection of short stories by Gordimer and a new novel by Lessing, indicate just how widely these two paths have diverged.

A prime element in this distinction is the rather simple fact that Gordimer has stayed in Africa, while Lessing left at the age of thirty for England and has not returned. Thus the chief metaphor for Gordimer is still Africa itself; in Lessing, the metaphor is now much broader—not necessarily less intense or more complex, but distinctly different. The focus of Gordimer's thematic concerns has crystallized her style into a concise, elliptical, almost breathless kind of prose: every sentence, every word counts, to the extent that her writing is at times as demanding and exhausting as it is rewarding. Lessing's prose still sings and gallops and thrills—often to a point of exhilaration and poetic ecstasy which one feels that Gordimer, the epitome of precision and control, would never permit herself.

But the difference is not so much one of style or even geographic/thematic content as it is one of vision. For Gordimer the struggle goes on forever: fighting against injustice, inhumanity, and pain. There's no way out for Gordimer's characters, though this does not plunge them into a Sartreian existential despair: they keep fighting, and they learn, grow, deepen with their suffering.

Lessing's characters are certainly no strangers to an equally intense mixture of despair, anger, and frustration, but especially in her later work—starting significantly with the visionary *Four-Gated City*—there does seem to be a faint thread of hope, a glimmer at the end of the tunnel. Lessing's later characters all seem to experience a transcendence of ordinary reality by channeling their struggle not into mere physical endurance but into achieving existence on another plane of being. As in Gordimer, hope lies in the perpetuation of a small band of survivors—what is basically an underground secret mini-community. But Lessing's community is spiritual or metaphysical in nature, whereas Gordimer's is grounded in political necessity. It's important to point out that Lessing's idea of spiritual transcendence is no more simplistic than Gordimer's theme of physical endurance; both are complex, fully articulated visions of alternatives to chaos and violence.

Gordimer's characters are desperately afraid of letting go, losing control, becoming unbalanced; the order they have imposed in their lives seems to be their only lever against chaos. In the new stories, they distrust alcohol, drugs, sex, too much "license" or freedom at any level, fearing the moment just before dawn when "the night opens, a Black Hole between stars, and from it comes a deep panting," the panting being both the uncontrollable "lion" nature inside themselves and all the incomprehensible things outside, like the native revolution they see as "a thick prancing black centipede with thousands of waving legs advancing." Likewise they fear their own failure to relate or to keep themselves and those they love from becoming, like the termite queen in one of the stories (and her counterpart, the narrator's mother), "an obese helpless white creature," immobile, blind, prisoner of her own children/subjects, "helpless to avoid the consequences of her power."

To attribute these fears that Gordimer's characters exhibit to Gordimer herself would, of course, be overly facile (she may in fact, be intensely critical of just these qualities), but the fact remains that she doesn't ever really let go herself in her writing, either in style or theme. The rigidity and discipline with which she gives us her world view link up rather obviously with a statement in the introduction to her *Selected Stories*, in which she maintains: "I believe, I *know*...that writers need solitude, and seek alienation of a kind every day of their working lives... Powers of observation heightened beyond the normal imply extraordinary disinvolvement, or rather the double process, excessive preoccupa-

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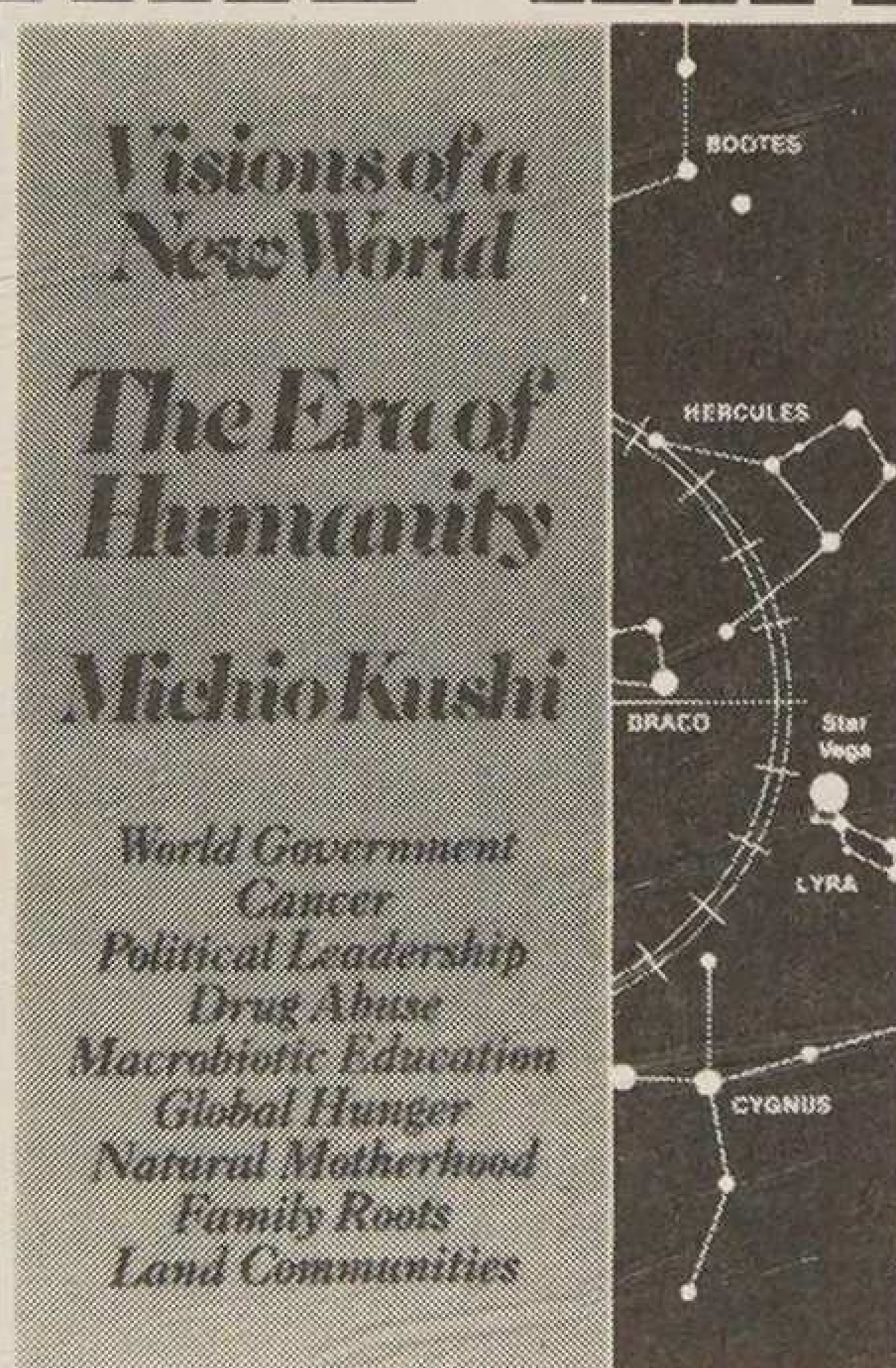

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tion and identification with the lives of others and at the same time a monstrous detachment."

On the other hand the credo of Lessing's Martha Quest, the narrator of her "Children of Violence" series, concludes that nothing is solved by trying to separate herself from the violence and madness in the world around her. As a microcosm of the macrocosm, she contains that same violence and madness within herself, and only by confronting it, admitting it, can she come to terms with love and hate, male and female, black and white, peace and war.

Thus the path that Martha chooses in order to achieve control—living inside, not outside, the chaos—is decidedly different from that of Gordimer's characters precisely because she takes a kind of leap of faith directly into the flux. Gordimer's characters fight it out—stony-faced, noble, unflinching.

How unlike the madman/journeyer of *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, the woman who goes through the wall in *Memoirs of a Survivor*, the time travelers of *Shikasta* (the first volume of a new series which Lessing has said combines qualities of space fiction and sacred literature); how especially unlike Al-Ith, the narrator of the second volume in that series, *The Marriage Between Zones Three, Four, and Five*, who not only becomes the symbolic link between two zones or levels of being, but must also then dissolve that link in order to go on, herself, to the next level, alone. Freed at last of the earth and its heaviness, she feels her body become lighter, more and more rare, until one day it no longer exists, and the transformation is complete.

In her struggle against violence and injustice, Lessing enters into the very flux of "rapid, dramatic change." Gordimer fights for change, but seems afraid of the very flux she seeks—and remains adamantly skeptical of any help from outside sources. The difference between the two struggles is the difference between a rigorous spiritual initiation and the slow process of social alchemy. In either case, the philosopher's stone is no less heartrendingly vital for all its painstaking elusiveness.

Rob Baker is a copy editor for the Manhattan Section of the New York Daily News.

CREDITS

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PROFILES

Joseph Campbell is an internationally-known scholar, author, and lecturer in mythology. He is Professor Emeritus of Literature at Sarah Lawrence College where he was a member of the Literature Department from 1934 to 1972. He has authored numerous books, articles, and commentaries, and is currently writing a two-volume *Historical Atlas of World Mythology*, to be published by McGraw Hill.

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Ursula K. Le Guin has won the Nebula Award for Best Novel for *The Left Hand of Darkness* and *The Dispossessed.* Other works, *Lathe of Heaven, Wizard of Earthsea*, and *The Farthest Shore* among them, are classics in literary science fiction. Recently she has published three highly diversified books: *Malafrena,* a historical romance (G.P. Putnam's), *Leese Webster*, a book for young people (Atheneum), and a novel, *The Beginning Place* (Harper & Row).

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P.L. Travers, author of the Mary Poppins books, *Friend Monkey, The Fox in the Manger*, and *About the Sleeping Beauty*, will have a new work published this fall by Viking Press. It is *Two Pair of Shoes*, two stories from ancient sources which were first published in PARABOLA, Vol. I, No. 3. She has devoted much of her life to studying, lecturing, and writing about myth, legend, folklore, and fairy tales. She is presently at work on an original book which she hopes to publish in the summer of 1981.

Carolyn White is a writer and storyteller. She is the author of *A History of Irish Fairies* (Mercier Press, Ireland) and a new book, *Kerry Tales*, to be published by Hawthorn Private Press, Dingle, Ireland in the spring.

Diane Wolkstein tells stories throughout the U.S., as well as leading conferences and workshops on storytelling. Although she tells stories to children and families, she has recently begun to concentrate on telling sacred tales for adults. She teaches storytelling at Bank St. College and tells stories weekly over WNYC-Radio in New York City. Her latest book is *The Magic Orange Tree And Other Haitian Folk Tales.*

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